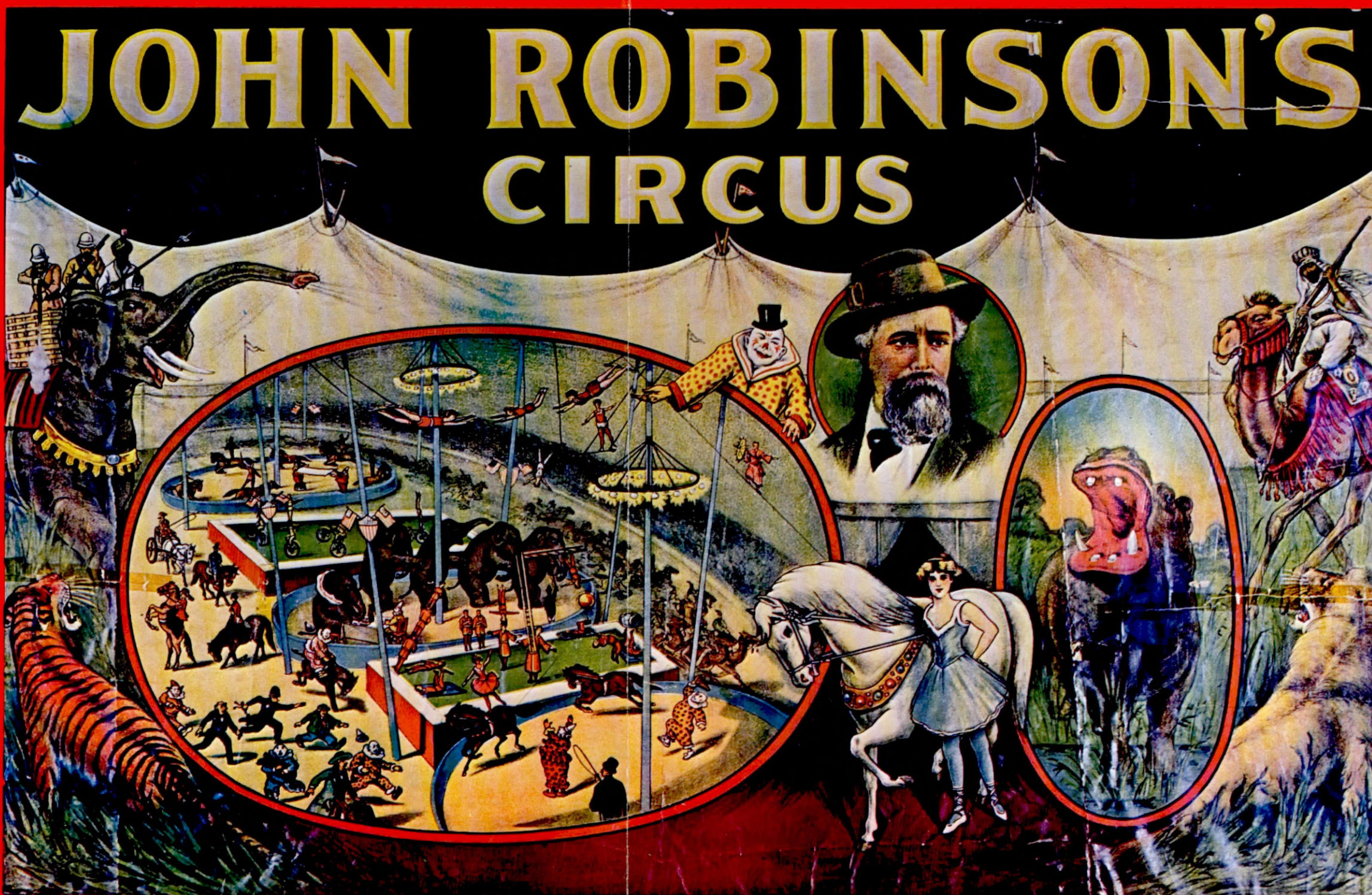


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NOVEMBER
DECEMBER
1974



**seasons
Greetings**
TO CIRCUS FANS AND
FRIENDS EVERYWHERE

RINGLING MUSEUM OF THE CIRCUS

Sarasota, Florida

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THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Vol. 18, No. 6 November-December 1974

Fred D. Pfening, Jr., Editor

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THIS MONTH'S COVER

Again as a feature of our Christmas special we are pleased to present a full color reproduction of a rare lithograph.

This unusual John Robinson lithograph was used in 1926. The name of the litho firm is covered by a date tail so we are unable to list the printer. The poster was originally in the collection of the late John C. Arter, of Charleston, West Virginia, and is now a part of the Circus World Museum collection. We thank the Circus World Museum for supplying the Bandwagon with a color photo of the poster for use on our cover.

NEW MEMBERS

Bruce Honig
TESC D 414
Olympia, Washington 98505

R. Donald Wilkinson
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Ithaca, New York 14850

2178 Jack S. Smith
117 Salisbury Drive West
Tarpon Springs, Florida 33589

2179 Donald C. Nieman
2626 Johnstown Road
Columbus, Ohio 43219

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5244 Clark State Road
Gahanna, Ohio 43230

2181 Donald F. Smith
6090 Ames
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2182 James F. Stegall
1324 Passage Way
Odenton, Maryland 21113

2183 Charles Edward Spielman
5821 South Nottingham
Chicago, Illinois 60638

2184 Jack Atkinson
P. O. Box 30082
Birmingham, Alabama 35222

2185 Robert R. Yarman
245 Malone Road
Mansfield, Ohio 44907

2186 Harry Lines
27 Commerce Street
New York, New York 10014

2187 Larry L. Engeregson
755 Highland Avenue
Beloit, Wisconsin 53511

2188 Parnell Brennen
P. O. Box 642
Hammond, Indiana 46320

REINSTATED

1551 Rudolph J. Hagene
418-1/2 - 2nd Street, West
Ashland, Wisconsin 54806

NO MORE MILWAUKEE PARADES

The Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company has announced that it will no longer sponsor the Old Milwaukee Days and the circus parade.

The 1974 parade had been scheduled, but was cancelled due to concerns about a then serious gasoline shortage making it impossible to ship the hundreds of horses to Milwaukee. There was hope that the event would be resumed again in 1975.

Since the first parade in 1963 the Schlitz firm has invested a total of nearly five million dollars in the parade and the Old Milwaukee Days overall event. They are planning to continue the huge fireworks display on the lakefront as in the past.

The contribution to the Circus World Museum since 1963 by Schlitz has been unbelievable. The brewing company paid for the restoration of almost every wagon in the Baraboo collection as well as the transportation of many of them to Baraboo from all over the United States and from England.

The library of the Circus World Museum was greatly enhanced in 1972 by the gift of 2,275 circus posters from the Lee Allen Estes collection by Schlitz. This addition made the Baraboo poster collection the largest private or public collection in the world.

The Circus Historical Society is most grateful to the Jos. Schlitz Brewing Company and its president Robert A. Uihlein for moving the Circus World Museum program ahead 15 to 20 years from what it could have done on its own.

40 HORSETEAM

What picture should be in the collection of every Circus Buff? That's easy. It's the picture of the 40 HORSETEAM. I am offering 2 photos of the 40 HORSETEAM. One is 16x20 and the other 16x18. They are as it appeared in 1903 and are printed black and white. Mailed First Class in a tube ready to frame. \$5.00 postpaid.

Bill Watson
3522 R. Willow Ave.
Castle Shannon, Pa. 15234



**Greetings and Best Wishes
for a
Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**



CIRCUS BILL POSTING AND ADVANCE ADVERTISING CARS

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

PART TWO

An amazing number of sheets of lithograph paper were used each day by circuses large and small. After extensive research regarding the price of lithos we were unable to locate an invoice from a printing firm showing prices prior to 1905.

In the Circus World Museum files we found a shipping list from the Riverside Printing Co., Milwaukee, Wisconsin, to the William P. Hall Shows, dated April 15, 1905. It would appear that Hall contracted for the full season's supply of paper at 3-1/2¢ per sheet. The one sheets are listed at 3-1/2¢ each. The three sheets 10-1/2¢ each, the six sheets 21¢, and so forth up to the largest size used a twenty-four sheet design at 82¢ each.

An invoice in our collection from the Strobridge firm to Barnum & Bailey dated May 27, 1909 shows that the cost of paper had either escalated or the Strobridge company commanded a higher price due to their quality. The 14 different one sheet designs were priced at 5¢ each. However, the cost per sheet for larger paper was not in a multiple of 5¢. A three sheet was 11-1/4¢ and eight sheet was 30¢, a twenty sheet 75¢ and a twenty-four sheet 90¢. Three different 32 sheet posters were priced at \$1.20 each. This invoice covered a shipment containing 30 days of wall and 30 days of window work and the total cost was \$1,302.75 plus freight charges.

Another Strobridge invoice dated March 6, 1918, to the Barnum show, interestingly enough, shows lower prices than those of

1909. No one sheets are listed, the smallest size being a two sheet at 8¢. The three sheets were 11¢, eight sheets at 29-1/3¢, twenty sheet bills at 73-1/2¢ and 24 sheets at 88¢



This most unusual poster design was used by the Adam Forepaugh Show in 1884. It was printed by the John E. Jeffery Printing Co., of Chicago, Illinois. All illustrations with this article are from the author's collection unless otherwise noted.

each. The various printing firms issued illustrated catalogs showing the stock circus poster designs they maintained on the shelves. An Erie Lithographing & Printing Co. catalog issued around 1918 lists one sheets at 5¢ each, two sheets at 8¢, six sheets at 24¢, twenty sheet bills at 80¢ and twenty-four sheet designs at 96¢ each. No mention is made if this included imprinting or crosslining the show's title.

The National Printing & Engraving Co., New York, Chicago and St. Louis, also issued a catalog in 1918. The National prices varied by design. Some one sheets were \$7.25 per 100 or \$55 per 1,000. Other designs were \$4.25 per 100 or \$27.50 per 1,000. In each case imprinting of the show's title was included in the cost. Some National three sheets were 12¢ and others 18¢ each. Imprinting of the three sheets was \$1.50 for less than 100 and over that number free.

The larger litho firms naturally were very interested in signing season contracts to furnish all of the seasons paper for the larger shows. The contracts covering a full season offered "package" deals as detailed in a contract in our collection between the Erie Lithographing & Printing Co. and The Sells-Floto Circus Co. The full contract is listed below.

AGREEMENT

This contract made and entered into this 13th day of December 1926 by and between the Erie Lithographing & Printing Co. of Erie, Pa., as party of the first part and the Sells-Floto Circus Co., party of the second part

doing business a traveling circus with winter quarters at Peru, Indiana.

For the sum of One Dollar (\$1.00) by each to the other in hand paid, receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, do agree as follows:

The party of the second part agrees to purchase from the party of the first part all the lithographs and printing of show bills required to advertise their circus during the seasons of 1927 and 1928 at the following listed prices:

New (design) Four Color Lithograph Stand (bill posting) work 3,000 edition copies at 4-1/2¢ per sheet.

Reprints and reproductions 3,000 edition 4¢ per sheet.

One Color Block work 3,000 edition 2-1/4¢ per sheet; Two Color block work 3,000 edition 2-1/2¢ per sheet. Reprints of the above 2,000 edition one color 2-1/4¢ per sheet.

One sheet four color lithograph duplicate of stand work either new or reprints 5,000 edition at 5¢ per sheet.

One half sheet four color lithograph duplicate of one sheets or stand work either new or reprint 5,000 edition 2-1/2¢ per sheet.

Dates one color 2-1/4¢ per sheet not less than 15 sets of dates to be ordered at one time except for the opposition dates and full sets of opposition dates the price will remain the same. It will be the privilege to either furnish name of the town for the dates, or slips will be furnished gratis. (The slips with city name would then have to be pasted on by the show.)

One color banners 12¢ per sheet with charge of 1¢ per sheet for additional colors. The above prices includes the sewing of the (multi-sheet) banners as ordered by the representative of the show.

The above prices of four color lithograph and block work are based on our regular 113 pound MF lithograph poster paper. The dates on our regular 111 pound MF date paper.

The party of the first part agrees to produce the above work in a first class workmanlike manner and to give the party of the second part all available assistance in rushing shipments and tracing same through to destination. However, all responsibility for delayed shipments ceases when the same is delivered in good condition to the railroad, express or post office and the party of the first part will not be held responsible for delayed delivery.

Signed and sealed this 13th day of December, 1928.

The Erie Lithographing & Printing Co., by J. R. Lowe, President.

The Sells Floto Circus Co., by Jerry Mugivan, Treasurer.

Supplement to Agreement

Combination bills new work 4-1/2¢ per sheet for four color and 2-1/2¢ for two colors.

Combination bills reprints 4¢ for four color and 2-1/4¢ for two color.

If the show company leaves the boundaries of the United States it is agreed that the printing may be purchased in the country where said show is exhibiting.

Second Supplement to Agreement



The Great Wallace Shows also used paper from the Courier firm. This one sheet was used around 1900.

It is further understood and agreed that at any time during the life of this contract that the parties of the second part shall feel it advisable to change the title of the show or to remove it from the road the party of the first part would not hold them for any new or additional work under this contract.

However, the party of the second part agrees to pay for any printing that may be

The Courier Litho Company of Buffalo, New York, produced some of the most beautiful paper ever used by circuses. This is typical of the Courier paper used by the Ringling Bros. show in the late 1890's.



left on the shelves of the party of the first part that cannot be crosslined to the new title at the prevailing price of this contract. (End of contract.)

A note at the bottom of the second supplement states "Same for the John Robinson and Hagenbeck-Wallace." This would suggest that the Erie firm was also awarded the same basic contract for the Robinson and Hagenbeck shows for two seasons.

The improved lithographing technics plus competition in 1926 allowed four color lithos to be purchased within a fraction of a cent of the price charged in 1905.

However, by 1930, the price had gone up a bit. The files of the Circus World Museum hold a complete inventory of all the paper left on the shelves of three different printing firms at the end of the 1930 season for the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey, John Robinson, Al G. Barnes, Sells-Floto, Hagenbeck-Wallace and Sparks circuses.

The three printing companies were Erie, Illinois Litho Co., and Central Printing Co., The latter two both being in Chicago, Illinois.

The prices varied between the three companies. Illinois Litho priced some one sheets at 5¢ and others at 5-1/2¢ each. Central Printing charged 3-1/4¢ for all one sheet posters. Erie priced their one sheets at 5¢ each.

The prices on multi-sheet (bill posting) stand work were not the same either.

Some twenty sheet bills at Illinois Litho were \$1.10 and others \$1.00 each. A clown title 20 sheet at Central was priced at 70¢, while other 20 sheet designs were 75¢. Erie priced their 20 sheets at 80¢ and 90¢, with one Barnes title bill at 64¢. This was no doubt a two color bill with no illustration.

A 12 sheet poster at Erie varied in price, title bills were 37-1/2¢ and full color posters were 48¢ and 54¢ each. Central charged 40¢ and 45¢ for 12 sheet bills. Illinois charged 5¢ and 60¢ for this size.

The cloth banners varied in price also. A 9 sheet banner at Central was \$1.53 at Erie, \$1.17 and at Illinois \$1.53.



This rather unusual design was done for the Barnum show in 1907 by the Russell-Morgan firm.

All of this paper amounted to a large amount of money. Here is a breakdown by show and company.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus

Illinois wall and window	166,411 sheets	total value \$ 7,509.30
Central wall and banners	77,699 sheets	total value 3,278.51
Erie wall and window	73,010 sheets	total value 3,057.25
		\$13,844.06

John Robinson Circus

Erie wall work	260,000 sheets	total value 9,800.41
Erie window work	16,483 sheets	total value 666.31
Erie banners	31,183 sheets	total value 4,157.75
Illinois wall-window	32,350 sheets	total value 1,627.75
Central wall-window	19,384 sheets	total value 629.98
		\$16,882.20

Al G. Barnes Circus

Erie wall-window	491,164 sheets	total value 19,975.63
Central wall	4,300 sheets	total value 196.03
Illinois wall-window	75,736 sheets	total value 3,786.68
		\$23,958.34

Sells-Floto Circus

Erie wall	91,238 sheets	total value 3,533.75
Erie window	42,052 sheets	total value 1,737.73
Erie banners		548.92
Illinois wall-window	23,592 sheets	total value 1,263.98
Central wall-banners	2,796 sheets	total value 302.49
		\$ 7,386.85

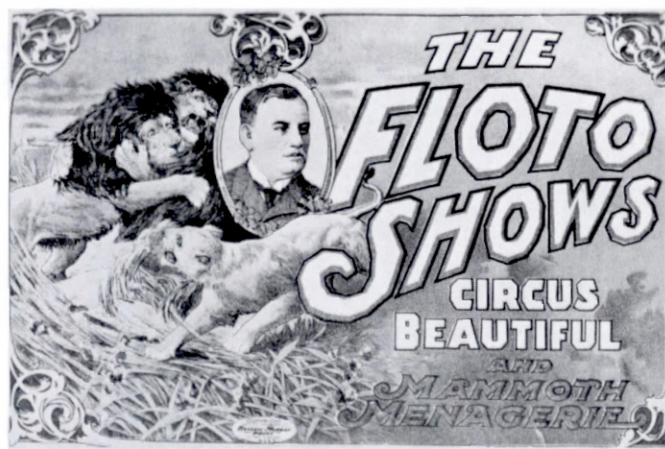
Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus

Erie wall	364,000 sheets	total value 14,269.58
Erie window	26,000 sheets	total value 1,229.05
Erie banners		total value 3,987.47
Illinois wall-window	135,933 sheets	total value 7,226.14
Central wall-window	25,770 sheets	total value 894.42
		\$27,607.14

Sparks Circus

Erie wall-window-banners	181,287 sheets	total value 7,760.73
Illinois wall-window	58,990 sheets	total value 2,940.00
Central wall-window	10,240 sheets	total value 276.58
		\$10,977.31

The largest quantity of any of the posters was the Sells-Floto Buffalo Bill one sheet flat and one sheet upright, there were 6,416 each of these on the Erie shelves at the end of the 1930 season. These appear to be left over from a prior season and not used in 1930.



The Russell Morgan Print division of the U. S. Lithographing Company produced many fine posters in the early 1900's. This design for the Floto Shows was used in 1905. Don Smith Collection.

Illinois had 3,750 Hagenbeck-Wallace one sheet flats of Gypsy Riders.

The smallest quantity on the full list was 6 one sheets of Marguerite on the Sparks show, held by Erie.

Although the total amount of paper for the above six shows seems like an enormous quantity a review of the total amount of paper used by the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus in 1934 shows that it was probably all used. Paper from John Robinson, Sells-Floto and Sparks was crosslined and used by Hagenbeck and Barnes, after the former three circuses were taken off the road.

We have not totaled the amount of paper used during the complete 1934 season of the Hagenbeck-Wallace show, but a few sample cities are good examples of the large quantity of paper used.

The opening stand was in the Coliseum in Chicago, Illinois, from April 21 to May 6. In Chicago 68,538 sheets of wall work were posted and 32,570 sheets of lithograph paper were hung in windows. This was by far the largest amount of paper used for a single stand during the season. Philadelphia was played for three days and 12,388 sheets of wall work and 10,493 sheets of window work were used there. Boston was showed for six days and 11,543 sheets were posted and 17,355 hung in windows. Cincinnati and Pittsburgh, both two day stands used around 17,000 sheets of paper each. St. Louis was a five day stand but only 7,420 sheets of wall work were posted and 8,961 sheets of window work hung. The smallest amount of paper used in a city was in Montclair, New Jersey, where 600 sheets were posted and 3,059 sheets were placed in windows.

Even with the United States in a Depression the price of lithographs began to climb in the 1930's. A catalog issued by the Erie Company dated October 1, 1932 contains a wide range of stock posters available from its shelves. The Erie prices in 1932 showed one sheet bills, including crosslining of title, at \$9.00 per 100, \$16 per 200, \$21 per 300 and \$33 per 500.

A standard price of 6¢ a sheet was charge1

for 4, 6, 8, 9, 12, 16 and 20 sheets wall work. Crosslining the title on the 6 and 8 sheets cost \$5.00 per hundred and on 20 sheets \$12.00 per hundred.

In 1936 the Central Show Printing Company, Mason City, Iowa, issued a catalog of "pictorial stock posters." Their prices, including crosslining with title, for a one sheet was 16¢ each in quantities of 100 to 900 and 14¢ each for one thousand. Their two sheets were 32¢ each and three sheets were 48¢ each.

The U. S. Printing & Engraving Company, of Kansas City, Missouri, also issued a catalog in 1936. The U. S. prices were a little less, the prices covered only one and two color bills. The one sheets in one color were 10¢ each and in two colors 15¢ each, in quantities of 100. But when buying 1,000 the price dropped to 3-1/2¢ for one color and 4-1/2¢ for two colors.

Central Show Printing at this time furnished paper to Seils-Sterling, Lewis Bros., Vanderburg Bros., and other smaller truck shows. Most of this paper was line and block color work using cuts and was not genuine lithographing. The U. S. firm supplied paper to the Tom Mix show and World Bros. as well as many other shows in the mid 1930's. Some of the U. S. designs were rather crude by lithograph standards.

Neil Walters was associated with the U. S. Printing & Engraving Co. After that firm closed he opened the Neil Walters Show Print in Arkansas. Many of the U. S. paper designs were then available from Walters. In the following years Walters furnished paper to many of the truck shows originating from Hugo, Oklahoma.

The 1936 paper catalogs of Central and U. S. are in the files of the Circus World Museum. The last prices listed in the Museum files are for the Chicago Show Printing Company and cover the paper purchased by the Ringling-Barnum Circus in 1954.

The Chicago invoice lists a "hippo" one sheet at 15¢ and the Francis Brunn and Unis bills at .204¢ Other size posters were as follows: 1/2 sheets at 8¢ and 10¢; 6 sheets at 97¢, 77¢ and 76¢; 9 sheets at \$1.08, \$1.26 and

\$1.37 each; 12 sheet \$1.46; 18 sheet at \$2.88 and 20 sheet at \$3.20.

Chicago Show Print furnished the banners to R-B in 1954 and were paid \$11.55 each for an 18 sheet "Lion-Tiger" design, the 12 sheet "Tent-Bull" was \$6.96 and four different 9 sheet banners were \$5.18, \$5.47, \$5.55 and \$5.18 each. Four different 6 sheet banners were \$3.45, \$3.70 and \$4.05 each.

The Greatest Show on Earth purchased their date sheets from Empire Poster Print, Chicago, Illinois, in 1954. The one sheet dates were 11¢ each and other sizes as follows: 2 sheet 22¢, 3 sheet 33¢, 4 sheet 44¢, 6 sheet 66¢ 8 sheet 87¢ and 9 sheet 98¢.

The cost of outdoor advertising and lithographing clearly was expensive by 1953 and 1954. The crew of the Ringling-Barnum bill car included 15 men with 7 more on the brigades, so it is clear less paper was posted in 1953.

An unanswered question, that has remained during the entire history of the American circus, is why have lithograph companies allowed various circuses so much credit.

One answer may be the personal friendship between showmen and the officials of the printing firms. Another possible explanation is a past history, during successful seasons, of prompt payment by the shows.

However, the litho firms were not all that bad in handling these past due accounts. They often insisted on mortgage papers being signed somewhere along the way, after their receivables began to look a bit in doubt. Many shows had the "shorts" money-wise in the middle of the summer and then picked up real money in the South in the early fall. A printer looked forward to better days, in shipping more paper, figuring that some additional paper would allow the show to move into different territory, and produce the money to pay the back bill.

Many examples of a show and a printer coming to an unfriendly parting of the way are on record. The most direct route to getting at least part of the money owed was to force a sale of the show property at auction. The lithographing company was often the largest creditor.

Stuart Thayer relates such a sale in 1874. During that season Andrew Haight owned two separate circuses, the Great Eastern and the Great Southern shows. Haight got behind in

his paper bill to James D. Torrey, of the Torrey Brothers, Printers, of New York City. In February of 1875, Torrey took action against Haight and the shows were auctioned. It was rumored in the New York Clipper that Torrey owned the 1876 Lent and French show. This show may have used the unsold residue of the Haight operas.

The late Richard Conover's book "The Fielding Bandchariots" relates financial trouble on the Howes Great London Circus in January of 1877. James Reilly, another New York show printer held a past-due paper account of \$30,000 against the show, and when the United States Rolling Stock Company went to court to file a lien, it found a first one to Reilly for \$31,000. A sale was rigged by Reilly and others and the show was sold to one John Parks. The show toured for two more years under the ostentatious ownership of John J. Parks and Richard H. Dockrill. After the two seasons James Reilly, the silent owner, decided that he might as well sell the show on extended credit to Cooper and Bailey.

An interesting turnabout of the relationship of circus owner and printing company is the case of Burr Robbins. Following his retirement from circus ownership in 1888 Robbins was listed in the February 16, 1889 New York Clipper as the president of the Empire Show Printing Company, of Chicago, Illinois. This followed an earlier report in the January 28, 1889 Clipper that Robbins was a creditor, in the amount of \$56,000 to the Jeffery Printing Company, also of Chicago. Robbins cleared this by taking over the company, by way of a purchase. Robbins remained in the advertising business and his family continued to operate the Outdoor Advertising Company in Rockford, Illinois.

On January 29, 1909, the Norris and Rowe Circus was sold at auction under court order. The record is not clear, but it would appear that the Donaldson Lithographing Company was a large creditor with claims in the amount of \$50,000 and they probably forced the sale. In any case, Archie Donaldson, of the Newport, Kentucky firm, bid \$15,000 and was awarded the entire property. The amount of

This special design was made by Erie for the Jones Bros. Cole Bros. World Toured Shows in 1916.



their past due paper bill is not known, but it was sizable, so they had purchased other claims against the show. Their total investment after the purchase was \$65,000. The Donaldson firm transferred the ownership of the show in a few days to Hutton S. Rowe, who was to continue as general manager.

The Norris & Rowe show did continue in 1909. It opened the 1910 season April 15, but by May 9, 1910 the show was taken over by creditors and it closed at Newport, Ky., which was interestingly enough, the home of the Donaldson Litho Co. The Peru Trust Company held the note so the show was brought to Peru, Indiana and placed in the Hagenbeck-Wallace quarters. Although there is no record of the Donaldson firm being a creditor, Andrew Donaldson and O. J. Bailey, of the Donaldson firm were present at the auction in June of 1910.

Insiders who were familiar with the situation say that the Donaldson firm closed in far too soon without allowing the Norris &

Rowe 1910 tour to really get underway. It had only been open about three weeks. It would appear that Donaldson was acting in conjunction with his very good friend Benjamin Wallace. Wallace wanted the Rowe show out of the way and there was a strong undercurrent that claimed Wallace was anxious to have the new Norris & Rowe tableau wagons. Wallace actually gave up the wagons to the Miller Brothers to discredit the rumor. It would appear that Donaldson had turned the past due paper bill note over to the Peru Trust Company, an interest of Wallace.

The Donaldson firm had closed in on the J. H. LaPearl Circus in 1899, taking that title off the road.

This page from a sample book of the Erie Litho Co. shows a few of the stock designs available from them in the 1920's and 1930's. The circus title could be added in a way that made it appear a part of the original design. Harold Dunn Collection.

Frank Mara has been researching the Frank A. Robbins Circus, and advises that he was told by Milt Robbins, son of Frank A., that during the seasons of 1913, 1914 and 1915, the train and wagons of the Robbins show were owned by the United States Printing and Lithographing Co., the parent organization of the Erie litho firm, who held a lien for a back paper bill. The 1915 season was the last for that show.

Louis Thilman owned a large part of the Sig Sautelle's Nine Big Shows during its last season on rails in 1914. The United States Litho Company took over Thilman's interest in the show due to his being unable to pay a large paper bill owed the firm during the season. The U. S. Litho firm closed in on the show in Leitchfield, Kentucky, on October 2, 1914. They shipped the show to Lawrenceburg, Indiana, where it remained until October 21, 1914, then having been sold to William P. Hall it was sent to Lancaster, Missouri. Due to a clause in the original sale by





The National Printing & Engraving Co. lithographed this bill for the Buffalo Bill-101 Ranch wild west show in 1916. The Miller Brother returned to National for paper when they reopened their show in 1925.

Sautelle to Thilman, all of the baggage stock and two stock cars reverted back to Sautelle.

U. S. Litho, through its Erie Division, were very busy dropping the axe on their circus customers during the 1914 season. That year in addition to Sig Sautelle they picked off the Wyoming Bill Wild West show and The Jones Bros. & Wilson Circus. The Erie company would not let a show get beyond a certain figure.

On a number of occasions the Erie company placed a man in the show ticket wagon to audit the incoming cash and to make sure that payments were made from the income to the paper house. These paper house men were usually a showman, and they would sometimes defect to the show, or at least work both sides of the street.

Erie, in 1921, became concerned about the financial status of the Rhoda Royal Circus and shut off shipments of paper to the show. For a few weeks the show's sole billing was newspaper ads and heralds. Royal apparently cleared part of the past due account as the show completed a long season closing on December 25, 1921 in New Orleans.

The 1922 season of the Rhoda Royal show opened in Biloxi, Mississippi, on March 15, but three weeks later on April 7, Erie foreclosed and that was the end.

The closing of the Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill Wild West show fits into the general subject of the relationship between paper houses and shows.

One of the worst cases of over billing by a show was the two Bills show from 1909 to 1913. The show's paper bill was huge, much of it coming from the expensive Strobbridge firm. Pawnee Bill Lillie was not in favor of the great expense but was overruled by the Cody interests. Although no records suggest that a paper company foreclosed on the show in 1913, there is no question that the drain of money for paper was a highly contributing factor to the final demise of the famous title.

During this period from 1905 to around 1918 it is interesting to note that those show-

men who made good buys on stock paper more often were successful, while the smaller showman who insisted on special expensive paper more often than not bit the dust. Andrew Downie is a good example of the use of stock paper. He used very little special paper on his Downie & Wheeler, LaTena and Walter L. Main shows.

The Erie management during its heyday of supplying circuses considered Charles Sparks as the outstanding owner to do business with. Sparks paid his bills on time. The Tom Mix show also met bills on time.

George H. Lux, a long time official of the Erie company was a good friend of P. M. McClintock, a serious student of circus advertising. Lux related a pattern among shows that saw the end in sight. Lux said that Erie would give a show every chance but one thing they discovered that was seemingly a common practice. When a show was going sour, and was in hock to a paper company or to William P. Hall, the owners would start taking the

The American Circus Corporation used paper from National in the 1920's. This Sells-Floto bill was used around 1928.



The Standard Litho Co., of St. Paul, Minnesota, supplied much circus paper. The Al F. Wheeler show used this stock bill in 1930.

cream off the top and buy money orders and send it home. Sometimes they got well and paid off after a few good weeks but Erie on more than one occasion had an attorney trail a show that was beginning to fade.

In 1929, Al G. Barnes was forced to sell his show to the American Circus Corporation due to many debts. One of the creditors was the Erie Litho Co., with a balance of \$40,000.

The undoing of Floyd and Howard King, and their two rail shows of the 1920's was caused by the Kings being unable to meet their paper bills. The Donaldson Lithograph Company foreclosed on the Gentry Bros. Circus in Paris, Tennessee, October 22, 1929. The paper firm shipped the show to the winter quarters in West Baden, Indiana, and sold the equipment from that location.

The National Printing & Engraving Co. of Chicago, had been a principal supplier of advertising paper to Gentry Bros. and the Walter L. Main shows, owned by the Kings. Most of the Gentry paper in collections today are from the national firm.

After losing the Gentry show in 1929, the Kings put the Cole Bros. title on their remaining 10 car show. The Cole show was foreclosed on by creditors in Scottsville, Ky., on August 11, 1930. The National Printing & Engraving Company was one of the larger creditors of the 1930 Cole show. Some of their past-due paper bills probably went back to the Gentry show the year before.

In addition to not being paid by circuses for paper that had been shipped to the shows, lithograph companies often had additional paper on their shelves that had been imprinted with a circus title. This paper was offered at reduced prices to clear their inventory. Other titles would then be printed on strips of paper and pasted over the original title. Or the original title would be cut off and the new title would be pasted at the top of the bill much like a date sheet tail would be pasted on the bottom.

On many occasions a circus owner would select a title of a no longer active show and use that title because of the availability and attractive price of the old paper in the inventory of the paper house. It was not uncommon



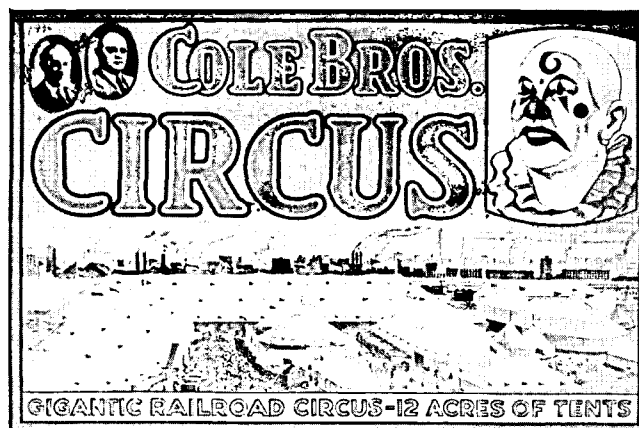
In 1935 Adkins & Terrell introduced their new Cole Bros. Circus. Most of the paper for the show came from the Erie firm, however, they picked up some old 1930 Cole Bros. paper from National and used it. This 1935 billstand shows two old National bills along with the new Erie bill of the two children on a hippo.

for a smaller show to change titles in the middle of the season when the paper with one title was used up. They would go to another title that had paper available.

In 1935, when Jess Adkins and Zack Terrell selected the Cole Bros. title they purchased the remaining old Cole paper from the National Litho company and used it along with the new style that had been specially designed by Erie for the new show. At least two styles of the National paper were used in 1935 and in 1936 by the Adkins and Terrell Cole show, indicating that a large amount of the National paper had remained from the 1930 Floyd King Cole show.

Floyd King in turn purchased a supply of old Christy Bros. multi sheets from Central Show Print of Mason City, Iowa. These were used by the King show during its first season in 1946. The Dailey Bros. Circus also purchased some of the Christy paper and used it during the same period.

The Christy paper had originally been lithographed by the National litho firm in Chicago. W. M. Temple, owner of the Central Show Printing Company purchased the remaining stock of Christy paper from National.



The Christy menagerie one sheet design was being sold by Central to collectors as late as the 1950's.

In 1955, Floyd King purchased the Cole Bros. Circus from Arthur Wirtz of the Chicago Stadium Corporation. A large amount of Cole paper came with the deal. The King show in 1955 was called King Bros. & Cole Bros. Combined Shows and much of the old Cole paper was used during the season.

Francis Kitzman was the advance car manager for the show that year and he was awarded the car and its contents in settlement at the end of the season.

In 1959, the Cole & Walters Circus used some of the Cole paper from Kitzman. The small truck show posted some 28 sheet pictorials. In most cases, part of the title was crosslined. It is not known if any of the Cole railroad unloading paper was used.

In the first installment of this article we stated that the last circus paper printed by the Strobridge company was 1939. We have since learned of paper done for the Ringling-Barnum show in following years.

Frederick A. "Babe" Boudinot has provided a background for the later years of association between the Greatest Show on Earth and the Strobridge firm. William H. Horton, Ringling's general agent, became disenchanted with the Cincinnati firm in the

Often circuses buying old titled paper didn't bother to cover or blank out the original title. The King show used this old Christy paper in 1946.

This may be the only newly printed National bill used by Cole in 1935. The original design had been used in 1930, but it was reshaped to include the photos of Adkins & Terrell.

later 1920's when deliveries became extended due to all of the other commercial work they were doing. This came to a head around 1929 when Horton and Boudinot went to Cincinnati in the spring trying to get some action on the Ringling orders, needed for billing the opening of the show in Madison Square Garden. It was early March and they found the posters would not be done in time. Horton went directly to Cleveland and arranged for the Otis Litho Company to quickly do two or three new bills. The show had always had to pay a higher price to Strobridge, but the work was better. By the 1930 season about all of the Strobridge paper had been used up. The show had begun using paper from Erie Litho as well as a few designs from the Morgan Lithographing Company of Cleveland.

After John Ringling purchased the American Circus Corporation, Charles Jordan, owner of the Central Printing Co., and the Illinois Lithograph Co., contacted Horton and arranged to have those two firms print large amounts of paper and banners for the Ringling show as well as Hagenbeck-Wallace, Sells-Floto John Robinson, Al G. Barnes and Sparks Central, Illinois and Erie handled all of the work for the six shows in 1930.

The Ringling-Barnum Chicago office adjoined the Central Printing office on Monroe Street as well as on Institute Place. The Ringling office was always rent free through the years, the tab being picked up by Central.

The location was good for the show, as in many times of opposition the show's Chicago man could go next door and get action at once on cloth banner dates.

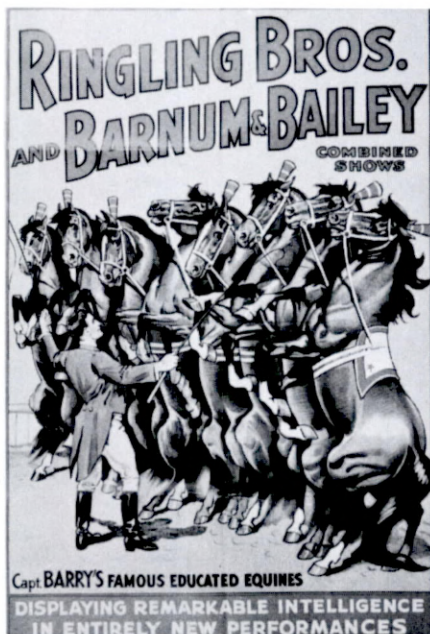
William Horton died in 1933 and C. G. Snowhill became the billing agent. Snowhill knew little of printing and only a small number of new poster designs were produced for a few years. Some of the left over bills were used up by the smaller shows, being crosslined with different titles when necessary. During this period most of the paper came from Erie with the banners continuing from Central.



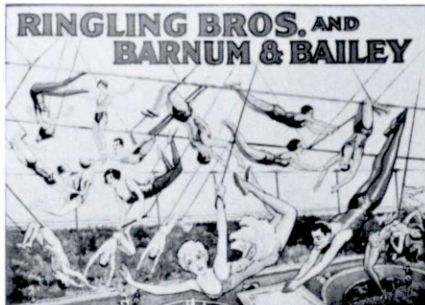
Following the separation from Strobridge Ringling-Barnum began using paper from the Morgan Lithographing Co., of Cleveland, Ohio. This rather unusual clown bill was done by Morgan in 1931.



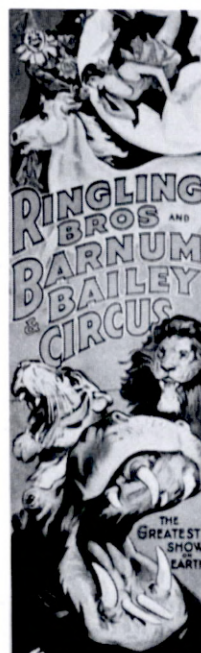
This is another example of 1932 Morgan work for RB. Their artwork was different and could usually be easily spotted.



Around 1930 the Ringling-Barnum began using extensive amounts of paper from both the Central and Illinois litho companies. The two firms were then combined and this poster was produced by them around 1931.



These two half sheet bills were made by Morgan in 1932. It does not appear that Morgan did any work for the other Ringling owned shows of the early 1930's.



Ringling-Barnum contracted with the E. J. Warner Poster Co., also of Cleveland, Ohio, for some new bills in 1934. These two half sheet panels were done by Warner in 1934.

As stated before the Ringling Barnum returned to Strobridge in 1938 for a number of new designs. Again, in 1939, Strobridge furnished paper to the show. In 1939 they did a bill on the "Man in the Moon" but the act fell in the Garden and the paper was destroyed.

John Ringling North hired Norman Bel Geddes to design the specs in 1941 and Bel Geddes and another artist, E. McKnight Kaulfer designed a number of new posters. The offbeat design of this paper was too far out for Strobridge. Arthur Hopper, then

Ringling general agent went to the McCandish Lithograph Co., in Philadelphia.

Among the McCandish bills used in 1942 were: Tiger head title; Hippo head title; "Holidays" spec, the Bel Geddes Elephant Ballet, and the "Old King Cole & Mother Goose" spec bill.

In 1943 the McCandish firm changed the type on the Drum Majorette bill and printed the following new bills; Lawson Woods monkey bill; script title bill, Felix Adler with pink umbrella, "Let Freedom Ring" spec, and the Liberty Bandwagon bill with a picture of Merle Evans.

A Sarasota artist, Bill Bailey, became associated with the Ringling-Barnum show in 1943. Bailey and Kaulfer signed their art work and their names appear on their posters. Bailey drew a large number of posters for the show during the next few years and his work was outstanding. The "Liberty Bandwagon" was his in 1943.

Among the 1944 new bills by Bill Bailey were "Panto's Paradise" spec, menagerie interior with the Mr. & Mrs. Garguanta cage and a new giraffe bill. In 1945, Bailey did the leopard act with girls and some other animal titles.



This is an example of the 1938 Strobridge paper produced for Ringling-Barnum. The renewed relationship with Strobridge lasted only two years.



The various posters designed by the Norman Bel Geddes studios were printed as part of the first order to the McCandish Litho firm of Philadelphia. This elephant ballet bill was done in 1942.



These two McCandish bills, produced in 1944, are good examples of the clean crisp art style of Bill Bailey. They were printed in various sizes, these are as wide as a standard half sheet, but are not as high.

The McCandish firm furnished tons of paper to the Ringling show during the 1940's. During the years of 1941 to 1944, the Philadelphia firm produced 91 styles and sizes of posters for the Greatest Show on Earth, selling it at 8¢ and 9¢ a sheet. McCandish continued to supply the Ringling show year after year until 1951. In 1949 they supplied 48 sizes and styles, 16 in 1950 and 18 in 1951. McCandish later became part of the giant U. S. Printing & Lithograph Co.

In the early 1940's the Central Printing & Illinois Lithographing Co. was liquidated and the banners were no longer available from them. Arthur Hopper went to the Globe Poster Co. in Chicago and the show stayed with them for two or three years. Ringling then went to the Chicago Show Printing Co. in 1948.

Chicago Show Print supplied 24 styles of paper in 1948. Many of these designs are



familiar, such as the clown in the elephant trunk. The two giraffes with the billboard was done around 1950. The Forrest Freeland designs of Unis, Francis Brunn and the Alzanas were Chicago Show Print bills. A total of 40 styles were produced in 1950. The company continued each season to supply around 30 styles through the 1956 season. It was around this time that the company became so big and was doing so much business with their Mystic tape that they asked the Ringling show general agent, Babe Boudinot to find another company to handle the show's poster needs. Chicago Show Print actually did not print additional paper after 1956 but continued to supply paper out of inventory in 1957 and 1958.

It was then that the show went to the Empire Poster Co., also in Chicago. Boudinot had begun using the Empire in 1955 when they did 15 different styles. Ringling continued with Empire as late as 1960. The old Lawson Woods monkey and elephant poster was one of the Empire bills used by the show in 1960.

In 1954 Ringling-Barnum secured a few designs from Strobridge. Two of the Strobridge multi-sheets are shown in this 1954 bill stand.

In 1954, Boudinot went back to Strobridge and talked them into doing some Ringling work again.

For the 1954 season the Strobridge firm

produced three different styles of posters. These do not carry the Strobridge name, but do have a union seal with Cincinnati local number 8. The best known of these is the head on view of a leopard's head with a green background. This was actually a rehash of a leopard bill drawn by Bel Geddes in 1941 and produced by McCandish. The drawing is new and the lettering of the title is different than on the 1941 original. Two styles of the leopard head were made, one a vertical and the other a multisheet with the title in a different position. The third design is the one of Pat Valdo in clown white face. The Valdo bill is largely white, with title in blue outlined in red.



This Forrest Freeland drawing of the Alzanas was done by Chicago Show Print in 1949. Chicago Show Print also reprinted many of the McCandish bills.



The Riverside Printing Co. found itself loaded with old stock paper in the 1930's. It was sold cheaply to many truck shows. This bill was used by the Haag Bros. Circus in 1937.

Large amounts of the Riverside stock paper were used by the Walter L. Main Circus in 1937 also.

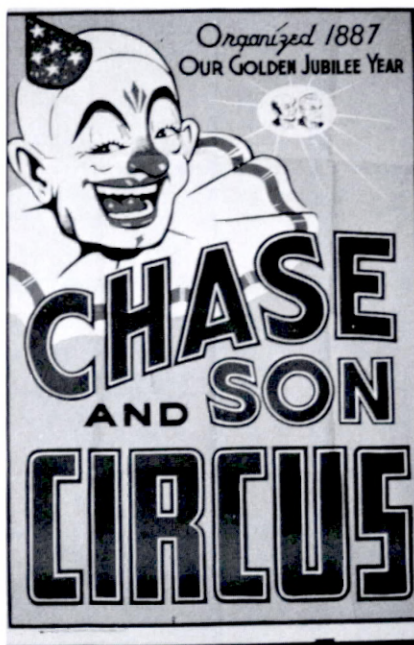


This National litho is a good example of a show buying paper from left over stock. The poster was done for the 101 Ranch Wild West and is imprinted with that title. The Jack Hoxie Circus bought the paper in 1937 and pasted their title over the Ranch name.

The green leopard head poster has been used in recent years, but these have come from another printing house.

In 1956, the Ringling show awarded it's contract for dates to the Neil Walters Poster Corp. Walters supplied dates in 1959 and probably in 1957 and 1958. No pictorial paper came from Walters, however.

Around 1959, the show began using the Murray Poster Printing Company of New York. Murray has continued to produce some of the newer designs in recent years. Many of



The Temple Litho Co. established a plant in Mason City, Iowa, and later changed its name to Central Show Print. This 1937 Chase and Son bill is typical of the paper furnished by the firm to Seils-Sterling, Lewis Bros. and other truck shows of the 1930's. Central continued to print circus paper for many years.

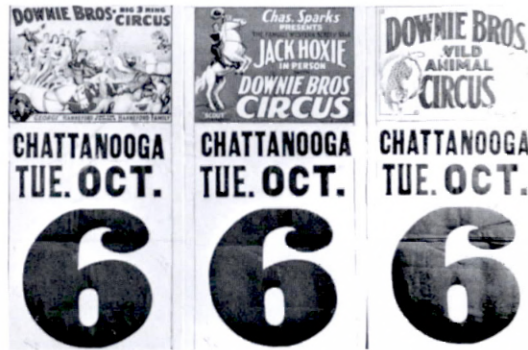
these are on coated slick paper as opposed to regular matt finish regular litho paper.

Mention is made above concerning the three bills designed by Forrest Freeland used by the Ringling-Barnum show in 1953. Freeland introduced a new technique to the art of

These pictorial full color date sheets were used by Downie Bros. in 1936. In 1937 two additional designs were used, one of two lions and one of Buck Owens. The dates were 14 x 28" in size.



The U. S. Printing & Engraving Co., of Kansas City, Mo. produced this stock one sheet in 1938. Many of the U. S. designs were later available from Neil Walters, a former U. S. employee.





The Globe Poster Company of Chicago printed this Forrest Freeland drawing for the 1945 Cronin Bros. Circus.



The Acme Printing Company of Hugo, Oklahoma, furnished paper to many shows in 1965. Many of the paper designs came from

color photo copies of old posters. This Carson & Barnes was originally an Erie Ringling-Barnum design.

lithography, that to best of our knowledge has not been duplicated by any other artist.

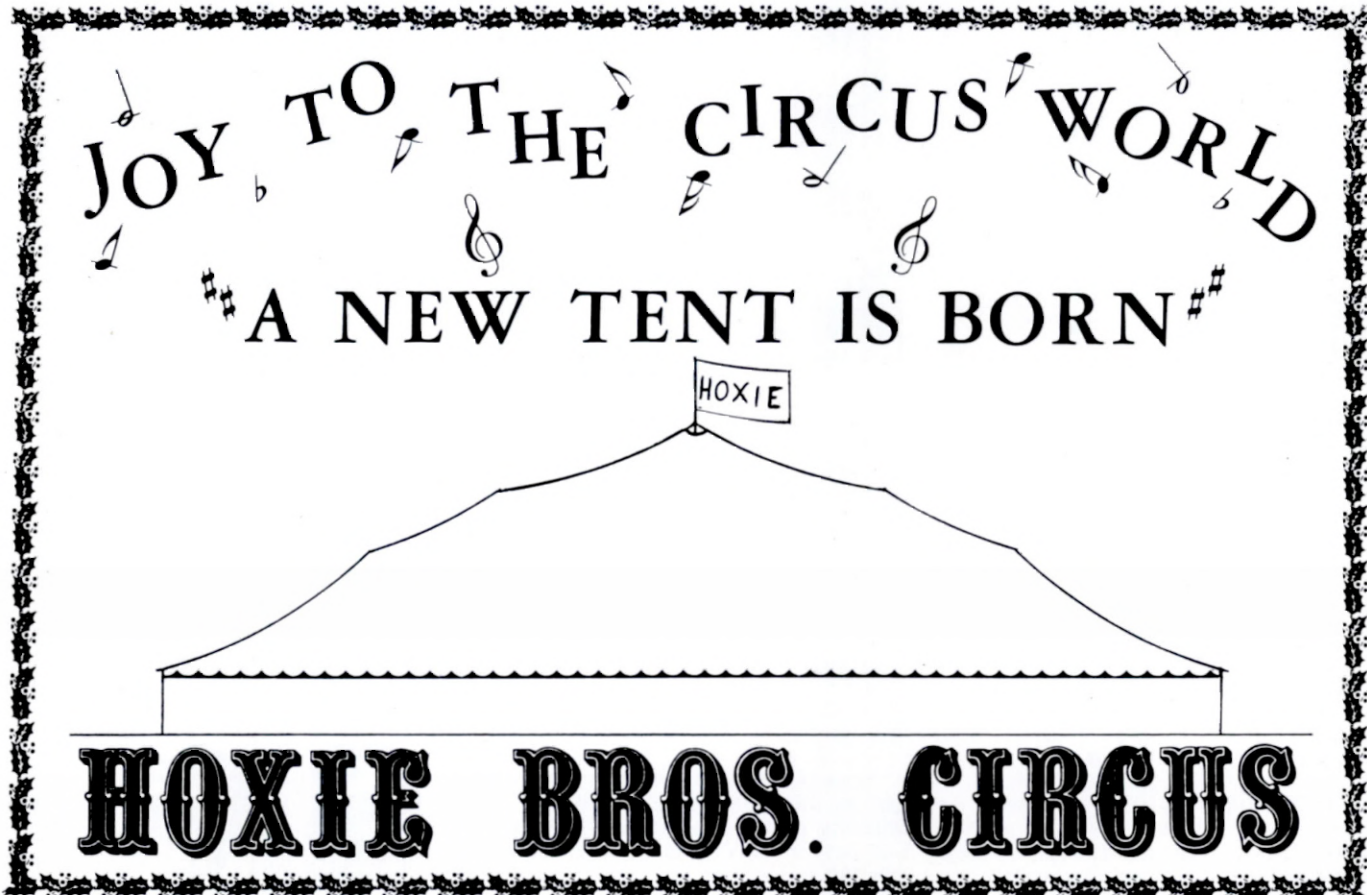
In a recent phone conversation Freeland explained how it came about. In the middle 1940's, Freeland was working in Los Angeles and was asked to design a new design poster of Clyde Beatty in the big cage. It was late in the spring and the paper was needed on short notice to begin billing. When the art was delivered to a local poster printer, it was found that at least six weeks would be re-

quired to separate the colors and produce the art work in the usual way.

In a discussion with the printer, Freeland asked if it might be possible for one step, that of separation of colors, to be skipped. He conceived the idea of drawing directly on the plate, or negative, doing each color on a separate plate. Using a master registration key-plate, he produced the four colors and the bills were printed in a matter of a few days. This

was the original method of making lithographing stones.

Freeland again in 1958 produced a number of very fine designs for the Cristiani Bros. Circus using this came cost cutting technique. Although Freeland has done no posters in recent years, he did design a number of newspaper ads for circuses on tour in 1974. He also did the color art work on the cover of the Beatty-Cole circus program used in 1973 and 1974.



Seasons Greetings

FROM THE STAFF OF



Behind The Scenes With John B. Ricketts

By C. H. Amidon

Almost anyone conversant with American circus history is familiar with the basic facts concerning John Bill Ricketts' contribution to circus development. Ricketts was an apprentice of Hughes, who in turn had learned his riding skills from Astley. Both these English equestrians left better documented careers than did Ricketts. Although he landed in Philadelphia and established his first circus there, Ricketts traveled widely and left "tracks" in numerous other cities. Pioneer circus historian C. G. Sturtevant covered much of the Ricketts narrative in a general way.¹ However, more recent collateral material concerning the early American stage² has revealed more fully the close connections between the theater and circus of that period. The stage and the ring are treated as a dichotomy by most historians, but the constant intercourse between the two forms of entertainment in the 1790's is very similar to the situation between traveling circuses and menageries, a generation later. In the latter period the circus "borrowed" features from the menagerie, and vice versa, until the two types of traveling show differed in name only, and finally became one. In the case of the theater and circus, the exchange proved to be largely part of the "growing pains" of both institutions, as they struggled for acceptance and survival. Finally each went its own way in the entertainment business.

In England and France, theaters were licensed by the King. When equestrian shows such as Astley's became popular, theater owners sought to retain their niche in the entertainment field with a prohibition against speaking parts in the circuses. This led to the development of pantomimes, ballets, spectacles and a great variety of entertainment, circumventing the specific ban. Also, circuses generally had only a summer license, which gave theaters a free rein during the winter season. In America the existing prohibitions were against all stage and ring presentations, on moral grounds, except for the specific ban on entertainment during the Revolution. Thus, in this country, the separate ingredients of theater and circus were relatively free to mix together.

Our country immediately after the Revolution might be characterized as a broad beachhead along the Atlantic. Scattered along its entire length were five cities of comparable size—Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Charleston, S. C. All were busy ports and commercial centers, but their social backgrounds differed considerably. Puritanical Boston, Quaker Philadelphia and even New York were slow to accept theatrical offerings of any kind. At the southern end of the sea-

board, however, plantation owners were much more receptive. Theater offered one way of transplanting the English gentleman's way of life to America. Also, Eli Whitney's invention of the cotton gin in 1793 was to bring new prosperity to the South. Charleston apparently offered a receptive audience, a pleasant climate, and a base from which tours on a regular southern theatrical circuit were organized.

Traveling troupes of actors appeared in America as early as the 1720's. In Philadelphia during 1749-1750, the Murray and Kean players had converted Plumstead's warehouse into an acceptable theater. The "American Company" of actors, organized in England, was brought to York River, Virginia, by Lewis Hallam in 1752. They played at Williamsburg, New York City, and were then invited to Philadelphia by "several gentlemen" of that city. The troupe next went to the West Indies, where the senior Hallam died. David Douglass married his widow, and brought the company back to Philadelphia in the late 1750's. They toured both the northern and southern cities until the Revolution.



"The Tailor's Ride" featured pantomime, plus a well trained "unridable" horse. All illustrations by the author.

In October 1774 the Continental Congress passed its resolve, "That we will in our several stations encourage frugality . . . and discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially all horse racing and all kinds of gaming, cock fighting, exhibitions of shews, plays and other expen-

sive diversions and entertainments." This was not morally inspired like earlier and later prohibitions, but rather an attempt to gird the country for severe wartime conditions.

During the Revolution, theatrical diversion was offered in Philadelphia and New York by British Occupation troops. Even at Valley Forge, American troops organized their own stage shows. With the return of peace, and the removal of Congress' ban on entertainments, the Pennsylvania Legislature in 1779 passed its own prohibition against "building any playhouse, theater, stage or scaffold" for theatrical purposes. In the National Capitol leading citizens including President Washington openly attended theaters in spite of the law. In 1788 Hallam and Henry were successful in petitioning for the lifting of the ban. In 1791 Thomas Wignell left the "American Company" to join a prominent Philadelphia musical impresario, Alexander Reinagle, in a new theatrical venture, which was destined to parallel Ricketts' efforts for the next eight years. The "New Theater" was built at Sixth and Chestnut, at a total capitalization of \$30,000. This theater was said to be the finest in America. It was a copy of the Royal Theater in Bath, arranged like an opera house with two tiers of boxes. Seating capacity was 2000. Wignell went to England to procure new actors.

By 1792 the Hallam company, now called the "Old American Company," had been weakened by age and attrition. Mr. Henry also returned to England to recruit new talent. Meanwhile, the company featured Mon. Placide, with his French company of tumblers, dancers and pantomimists.

The "New Theater" was finished in 1793 when Wignell returned with his new actors, but Philadelphia was in the grip of one of its worst yellow fever epidemics. Wignell's departure two years earlier had signalled the end of the "share system," on which the company was originally organized, and the beginning of salaries for actors. As the troupe "sat out" the epidemic in Sandtown, N. J., these salaries caused a severe financial drain. At the close of the season, Wignell and Reinagle took their troupe to Baltimore. This was the start of a summer and early fall tradition at their "New Theater" on Baltimore's Holliday Street. On the other hand, this was the final season in

Philadelphia for the "Old American Company."

Now it is time to pick up Ricketts' activities. He had arrived in Philadelphia in 1792, with his younger brother Francis. In the fall he opened a riding academy at Twelfth and High (Market) streets. His circus performance opened April third of the following spring. In early August he took his small company to New York, thus escaping by a couple of weeks the yellow fever epidemic. In February of 1794 Ricketts was in Charleston, giving his performance during the Jockey Club races. His tour did not take him back to Philadelphia until September, since there was a general fear that summer would bring a repetition of the plague. In late December he opened at his Broadway amphitheater in New York. The following summer he took his circus to Boston and Hartford, returning to New York in September to again encounter yellow fever. This limited the New York engagement to two performances. Back in Philadelphia, Ricketts' new "Art Pantheon" circus building was finished at Sixth and Chestnut, beside Constitution Hall and directly opposite Wignell and Reinagle's "New Theater." The Art Pantheon was a circular building, housing a ring and a stage. The 1795 season had brought new performers into the Ricketts company. These new talents were to bring an infusion of English tradition to Ricketts' program, resulting in a curious blend of theater and circus.

Mr. Matthew Sully and his son Matthew, Jr., had joined Ricketts during the summer tour. The Sully family were to make a considerable impact on the arts in this country, making it worthwhile to take a quick look at their family tree. Matthew Senior was the son of a wealthy but inflexible Englishman. He was disinherited for giving up theological training, in order to marry Sarah Chester. Matthew pursued a stage career in England, while their love match produced a cast of nine children. Matthew's sister was the wife of Thomas West, who planned the Charleston theater, and she was instrumental in bringing the Sully family to Charleston in 1792.

Matthew Sr. was a renowned Harlequin and pantomime director. Matthew Jr. was a ground and lofty tumbler, and a dramatic actor. Mrs. Sully had considerable musical talent, and gave music lessons in Charleston. The oldest son, Lawrence, studied art and became a miniature painter. A younger daughter, Julia, married a French miniaturist named Belzons. Thomas was apprenticed to Belzons, later joined Lawrence and eventually married his widow. He had an art career in Philadelphia. Daughters Charlotte and Elizabeth were both actresses who appeared with Ricketts, as did Charlotte's husband Mr. Chambers.

Ricketts' 1795 program at the Art Pantheon was so well received that the New Theater across the street countered with Sig. Joseph Doctor, an acrobat from Sadler's Wells, and Mr. and Mrs. Lege, pantomimists from Italy. Ricketts, after offering a conventional

circus program for about two months, began to add pantomimes and other stage presentations. In his cast were the Sully father and son team and three other performers from Charleston. It seems that Placide and his French troupe had gone from Philadelphia to Charleston, where there was a sizable Huguenot population, and a taste for French offerings. This French troupe became another talent bank for Ricketts, from which came the Spinacutas, Douvilliers and Francisqui.



The hatching of Harlequin from an egg in "Harlequin Sorcerer" pantomimed the birth of all mankind.

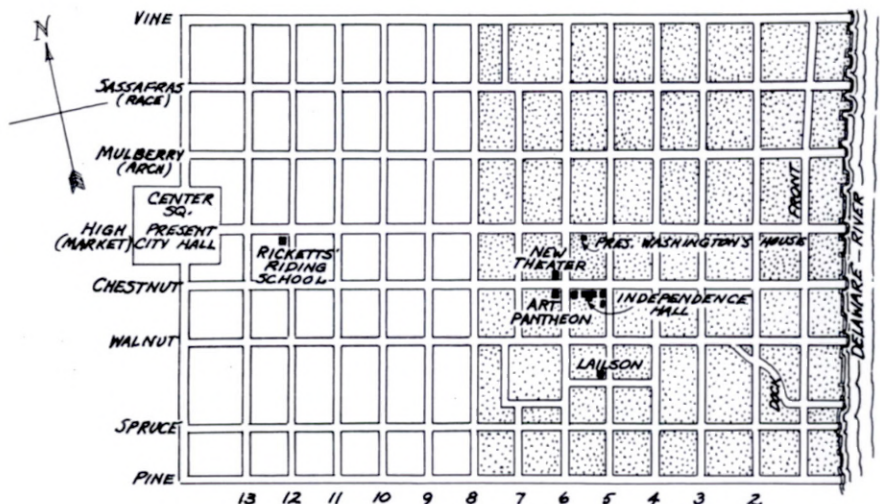
Ricketts again took his company to New York in early May, 1796. His program was predominantly circus, featuring Mrs. Spinacuta riding two horses, and the trained horse Cornplanter. Some pantomime was introduced, following the precedent set in Philadelphia. When the circus returned to Philadelphia in October, however, a definite strengthening of the stage elements took place. Thomas Clark Pollock³ extracted from fifteen periodicals and other historical sources the dramatic portion of Ricketts' program throughout this decade. This material is remarkably complete, listing each play, pantomime or other feature, with its cast. When we compare this material with Odell's³ equivalent treasure from the New York scene, a better understanding of the Ricketts program emerges. Generally, a conventional circus program came first, followed by one or more stage presentations. Sully undoubtedly staged most of the early theatrical numbers, and appeared in most as Harlequin. Spinacuta was usually Clown, and his wife, Columbine. Other roles varied. Francis Ricketts appeared often in minor roles, but John less frequently, until 1799. It is the number and variety of these afterpieces which is most astonishing. During Ricketts' Philadelphia engagement from October 10, 1796 to February 23, 1797, a total of 48 performances were given. During this run, twenty new afterpieces and thirteen recurring numbers appeared. Concurrently at the New Theater across the street, very similar farces,

pantomimes and ballets were presented, along with more classical plays. On Ricketts' closing night the same serious pantomime, "The Death of Captain Cook," was presented on both sides of Chestnut Street! The frequently changing stage show was perhaps the vehicle for repeat business, whereas the circus performance gave a universal appeal to the program.

Ricketts hosted President Washington at a performance on January 24th, and at a testimonial program on March 4th. His circus seemed to be at the height of its popularity, yet new competition was about to enter the scene. Lailson and Jaymond, French circus impresarios, erected a large circus building at Fifth and Prune (Locust) streets, just south of Independence Hall and about two blocks from the Art Pantheon. Specific information on the Lailson building is lacking, except that it was topped by a "prodigious dome" 90 feet high. Lailson's season ran from April through July, while Ricketts was in New York. The program content was equivalent to that offered by Ricketts, and former Ricketts performers appeared in the casts. Sully, McDonald, Reano, Langley and Miss Robinson were familiar names among those of the French performers. Titles of stage presentations were a curious mixture of English and French. Soon after this engagement, yellow fever again appeared in Philadelphia, but Lailson was off to New York, where he constructed another competing circus building along Greenwich Road, near the Ricketts location. This "New Circus" offered alternating circus and stage shows for some time during the fall, and then a combination program during December and January. Lailson had suffered serious financial problems, which had delayed his opening, and now he was again in trouble. His circus closed about February 1, 1798, and returned to Philadelphia, apparently without costumes or scenery. In early March a newspaper advertisement carried his apology for his preoccupation with financial matters. He stated that he had regained possession of costumes and scenery, and promised that the circus lights would no longer "prove disagreeable, as heretofore, to the spectators." His circus lasted only a month. For about two months thereafter, a series of benefit performances were given by members of his troupe. Lailson's building was then apparently used as a drill hall. Some time after a drill session by MacPherson's Blues on the evening of July 8th the entire dome fell into the building, completely crushing the interior. On July 18th, the entire Lailson circus was advertised for sale in a New York newspaper. During the last quarter of the year, Lailson appeared in Charleston.

The collapse of Lailson's building encourages some digression into the construction of theaters and circus buildings in this era. Sufficient expertise on wooden structures was certainly available. Only fifteen years later a double lane wooden covered bridge having a single span of 340 feet was completed across the Schuylkill River, and called "The Colossus." Yet Lailson's dome fell with no reported external provocation. Alfred Bernheim,⁴ commenting on theater construction in this period, quotes typical data for the

Beekman St. Theater in New York. This 400 seat wooden building cost \$1625. to build. Sixteen performances that season brought in about \$4800. Other expenses were \$1000. for scenery and \$625. for operating expenses, leaving a credit balance of \$1550. to cover salaries and living expenses for the troupe. Prior to the 1790's most theatrical companies operated on a sharing basis, with an appropriate number of shares assigned to cover the cost of building construction. The building was therefore constructed very cheaply, frequently for a single engagement, and consequently with minor regard for safety.



Astley's theater in Lambeth ⁵ across the Thames from London, had only a summer license. Astley wanted to move into the city and establish a winter theater. During the winter of 1805-1806 he bought an old French warship, the *Ville de Paris*, which was offered for sale as a war prize. He dismantled the ship and with unskilled help from a local public house, erected a building in the form of a tent. The ship's yards and bowsprit became the framework, the decking was used for stage and floors, and the vessel's sides became the walls. A tin roof was covered with canvas, and coated with pitch and tar. The entire cost was about 800 pounds. For years people marveled that this jerry-built structure managed to hold itself together. Ricketts' wooden structures, on the other hand, suffered no structural collapse but were consumed by fire. The competing volunteer fire companies in Philadelphia would not even accept responsibility for a wooden building, knowing the limitations of their primitive pumpers and bucket brigades. A trend toward brick and stone construction for theaters became evident around 1800.

Washington's acquaintanceship with John Ricketts is certainly worthy of a second digression. It is strangely similar to Lincoln's friendship with Dan Rice, and yet there is no record of any public criticism. The personalities involved were apparently very different. Of the four celebrities Ricketts is by far the least known. James Thomas Flexner's objective biography of Washington ⁶ contributes some interesting facts about our first President, which in turn suggest certain as-

sumptions about Ricketts, Washington, through Flexner's research and perception, was a southern aristocrat who was transplanted by fate into the north, during the Revolution and his subsequent presidency. He therefore acquired a more open mind on many matters than did most of his peers. In spite of his background of open door "southern hospitality," he came to appreciate the more formal society of Philadelphia. He had a keen ability to recognize the capabilities of others. If a guest proved knowledgeable in a field of Washington's particular interest, his

pointed. His Farwell Address, published in a Philadelphia newspaper the previous September, had served to crystallize his feelings and objectives, and to some extent this blunted the attacks. His appearances at Ricketts' two Philadelphia establishments did substantiate his approval of the circus. A further sign of this approval was the sale of his favorite war-horse, Jack, to Ricketts.

There was another serious yellow fever epidemic in Philadelphia during September, October and November, 1798. The casualty total of 3645 is impressive enough, but it is also well to consider that this represented about ten percent of the city's population. The New York engagement opened December 6th, with an advertisement that stove heat was now available. The Greenwich Street Theater apparently remained open until late June, but after December, non-circus attractions were advertised. Ricketts meanwhile opened in Philadelphia the day after Christmas, continuing until late March. The 1799 program is marked by an increase of native themes in his stage shows. Pantomimes included "The Death of Major Andre," "The Battle of the Kegs" (using the Front St. wharves as a locale) and "a magnificent representation of the siege of Gaza, battle of Arbela, and the triumphal entry of Alexander the Great into the city of Babylon."

In the autumn of 1799 it was again New York's turn to suffer the ravages of yellow

Government and entertainment were close neighbors in the Philadelphia of 1790's. Developed area is shaded.

reserve quickly melted and he became an avid listener. Such must have been the case in his relationship with Ricketts, a man with demonstrated ability as trainer and rider. Washington also emerges as an individual inwardly shy and sensitive, who built up a shell of reserve to resist the forces which buffeted him. Throughout his two terms as President, he tried to steer a middle course for the country, while subjected to intense pressures of dissent and vilification. A morning ride with Ricketts, through the outskirts of Philadelphia to Fair Mount and some straightforward "horse talk," must have been a pleasant release from his political cares.

By coincidence, Washington's two documented visits to Ricketts' circus came at times when the cares of his office were particularly severe. His first visit on April 22, 1793, occurred on the date of his Neutrality Proclamation, which was very unpopular at the "grass roots" level. The average man in the street wanted this country to aid France in its struggle for liberty. Washington knew that we had neither the funds nor the material to spare, and that we needed trade with England as well as with France. His other visit, on January 24, 1797, came in the twilight of his Presidency, when attacks against Washington were particularly



Ricketts' "Egyptian Pyramids" on horseback soon involved three horses and five people.

fever. The printing office of the Daily Advertiser moved into Ricketts' Greenwich Street Theater, in an attempt to continue publication, outside the most congested area of the city. At some time the Theater was destroyed by fire. Friends gave Ricketts a benefit on November 21st, the opening night in Philadelphia. On the evening of his tenth performance, December 17th, the Art Pantheon also was burned. This spelled financial ruin, to the tune of some \$20,000. Ricketts decided to return to England, but was lost in a storm at sea, when the ship foundered with all hands.

Francis Ricketts, we understand, did perform with other circuses, although he never equalled John's fame as a rider. Sturtevant lists Francis as a clown with the Boston Circus of 1810. Odell lists later Ricketts with Bryant's Minstrels in 1864 and as a brother act of pantomimists in the 1880's.

The Ricketts period of the 1790's is interesting because of the curious flirtation between circus and theater. Many of the actors of the time, most of whom came from England, France and Italy, had this dual background of experience, and could move

freely from one medium to the other. Furthermore, the circus performance had not yet developed its full spectrum of variety. Ricketts and his peers did anticipate the mud show treks of the next generation, and for that matter, the present-day existence of auditoriums in major cities. Some of their stage productions anticipated the lavish circus specs of a later time. In England and France the pantomimes developed into elaborate spectacles, during the subsequent half-century.⁷ In this country the birth of the "mud show" necessarily limited the circus program to more basic ingredients. However, the circus constantly searched for new features, and the variety of Ricketts' day eventually became the "aftershow," with minstrels, variety acts, wrestling, boxing, and the wild west show.

FOOTNOTES

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2. Thomas Clark Pollock, *The Philadelphia Theatre in the Eighteenth Century*, Greenwood Press, N. Y. 1968
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3. George Odell, *Annals of the New York Stage*, Vols. I and II

4. Alfred Bernheim, *The Business of the Theater-An Economic History of the American Theater 1750-1932*, Benjamin Blom, Inc., N. Y., 1932

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7. A. H. Saxton, *Enter Foot and Horse*, Yale Univ. Press, 1968

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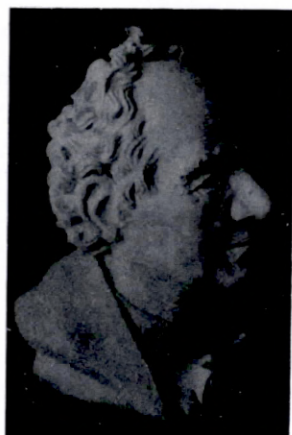
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ONE SHEET

By Stuart Thayer

This writer suspects that if a biography of George R. Spalding is ever attempted his contribution to the American circus will be found to be as great as that of William C. Coup. Both men had the vision to take advantage of technological advancements to further the success of their shows. However, Spalding was doing this twenty years in advance of Coup and did not have the obvious advantage of the intervening technological progress.

In 1852 Spalding put his show on a steamboat and in 1856 on the railroad. The water experiment was successful, coming as it did at the height of the steamboat era, but the railroad venture was a failure. No one has yet done the necessary research on Spalding's railroad experiment, but we assume that the difference in gauges between railroads, the lack of heavy roadbeds and of the T-rail doomed it. All these advances were available to Coup and he was successful.

We suspect that Spalding has been ignored because his exposure to this time has been almost completely in terms of his involvement with Dan Rice. Rice and Spalding did not get along and contended one with another over many years. Most of our information comes from people writing about Rice, so we have only that side of the argument, as a general rule, and Spalding thus comes out second best; the villain, so to speak.

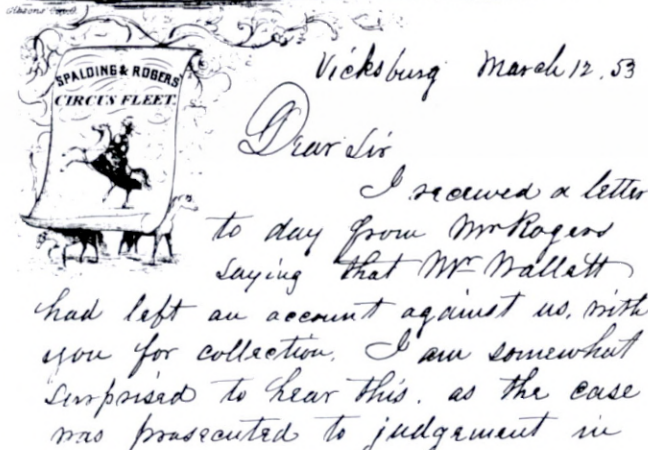
As an aside, Spalding is the correct spelling though it is often seen as Spaulding in ads. The Albany City Directories from 1839 through 1858 list him and the spelling is always Spalding, and the registry papers of the various vessels he owned also carry it in that form.

Joseph S. Schick wrote "The Early Circus in Eastern Iowa" in 1939, a book that includes references to early showboats carrying circuses, but he seems to have limited his discussion of them in order to cover other aspects of the theatre more thoroughly. The unused research appeared in an article entitled "Early Showboat and Circus in the Upper Valley" in *Mid-America* in July, 1950. From this article we obtained much information on Spalding's boats and we offer it here.

There were three of them, *Floating Palace*, *James Raymond* and *Banjo*. The first is the best known, but the one about which the least official information is available. Because it had no power it did not require a license and was not enrolled with the Bureau of Marine Inspection and Navigation, a major source of powered boat history. However, its picture appears often in various sources so its outside structure is familiar. It was a rectangular thing, like a flatroofed barn erected on a keelbottomed barge. The superstructure was well forward on the barge leaving a sizable clear space at the rear over which a second story projected. This was the area in which the public stood while waiting to enter the doors of the *Palace*. It is believed there was a museum just inside this entry and beyond it—toward the bow—the arena. A full sized circus ring, surrounded by boxes and loge seats, occupied the main hall. The second floor was a gallery, the arena being two stories high. There were eight hundred seats downstairs, one thousand in the gallery. Admissions were usually fifty cents and twenty-five cents.

There was a stage at one end of the main hall and somewhere offices, dressing rooms and stables. The company's complement was about one hundred persons.

The *Floating Palace* was built in Cincinnati in 1851 by E. M. and G. Shields. There are several versions of its size, varying from one hundred-ten feet in length to two hundred-fifty and in beam from thirty-five to sixty feet. With its museum, its cost has been placed at \$100,000. Towed by a hired steamer (i.e. pushed) it appeared on both the upper and lower Mississippi, the Ohio and the Wabash, and doubtless other rivers during its existence. It was used from 1852 to 1859. At the time of the secession of Louisiana from the Union it was tied up in New Orleans where it was seized by the Confederate authorities and in time made into a hospital. If it survived the war no record yet found tells of it.



from the John Lentz Collection

In 1853, Spalding had the same Shields firm in Cincinnati build the steamboat *James Raymond*, probably to have a regularly available source of tow-power for the *Palace*. This was a sidewheeler, one hundred-seventy-seven feet in length with a beam of thirty feet. The draft was five and one-half feet with a displacement of slightly over two hundred-seventy-four tons. Like the *Floating Palace*, the *Raymond* was fitted up for exhibitions, having a stage for the presentation of minstrel shows. It also contained staterooms for the performers, crew quarters, a galley, mess hall and laundry. At the time of its Federal registration in October, 1853, it was described as having no gallery, no figurehead, one deck and no mast. It was fitted with two boilers.

Spalding and his circus partner of many years, Charles J. Rogers, were listed as the owners, Spalding as the master. In 1861, the Federal government seized the boat, paying the partners \$32,000 for it. It appears the government had little use for it—too early a war for USO shows, perhaps—as William A. and Joseph G. Adams of St. Louis were listed as owners at the time of inspection in October, 1862.

After the war the *Raymond* was in the Vicksburg-Memphis trade and in early 1866 was tied up at Memphis for debt. It was sold at a U. S. Marshall's sale to Captain Campbell and others in April, 1866 for \$8,000. On the morning of April 24, 1866, near Island Number 40, a boiler head blew out killing the first engineer and injuring several others. The boat caught fire and was damaged to the tune of \$2,000. It was insured for \$10,000 at the time. The wreck was towed into St. Louis where it burned again, this time fatally, on June 2, 1866.

The third of Spalding's boats was the *Banjo*, a smaller version of the *James Raymond*, built in 1855, again by the Messrs. Shields. Spalding and Rogers owned half of it, John Mann of Dayton, Ohio, one quarter, and William McCracken of Ohio the remainder. The *Banjo* seated eight hundred in the theatre, had a displacement of one hundred-fifty tons, was one hundred-fifteen feet long and twenty-five feet wide with a draft of four feet. It, too, was used for minstrel shows and in one season—1858—had Donatti's Monkey Circus, a dog and pony show, aboard. By October, 1856, William Mann, who was the captain, was no longer a part owner. In October, 1858, William McCracken died of fever when the show was in Paducah, Kentucky. After this the *Banjo* was apparently sold. It next turns up in 1860 at Kansas City with "World Star Minstrels."

Schick states at the end of his article that no history of the theatre in middle America can be complete without a note on these marginal attractions—the circus and the showboat—which caused the people to leave their fields and shops, and to desert the lecture halls.

Great American Circus Season of 1939

PHOTO SUPPLEMENT

By Joseph T. Bradbury

A very fine history of the 1939 Great American Circus by Doug Lyon was published in the Nov.-Dec. 1967 Bandwagon. Two additional photos were run in a supplement in the March-April 1968 issue but generally shots of this short lived show have been very scarce. We are fortunate in obtaining this group of photos taken by the late Hugh S. McGill at the show's opening stand in Inglewood, Calif. May 24, 1939. A dispute with the American Federation of Actors closed the show at Pomona on May 31.

Since the original article is now out of print a brief review of the show's history might be welcomed by those unable to obtain a copy. The show was operated by Fanchon & Marco, a well known talent agency of Hollywood, which for many years had operated vaudeville units, special entertainment shows, and provided acts for fairs and other celebrations. C. W. Nelson, manager of the fair booking department produced the Great American performance. Physical equipment was leased from Ringling-Barnum which owned the properties of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus which had gone broke on the West Coast in September 1938 and had been stored in the former Al G. Barnes-Sells-Floto quarters at Baldwin Park, Calif. Fifteen rail cars of equipment were included in the deal which was handled by Ringling's representative, Ralph J. Clawson.

An excellent performance was put together highlighted by Bert Nelson's wild animal act, the last one, incidently, that famous trainer ever worked. Staffers, bosses, and working-

Grandstand ticket wagon. This wagon is now at the Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. painted with the Arthur Bros. title, a show it was on in 1945.



Louis Roth, chief wild animal trainer on the Al G. Barnes Circus for many years on left with Bert Nelson, who worked a lion and tiger act and also served as equestrian director of the Great American Circus in 1939. This was Nelson's last circus engagement.

men were plentiful in the area as it had been announced Ringling was taking the Al G.

Barnes-Sells-Floto Circus off the road and former "Barnes men" now unemployed were all over the place.

The Great American Circus opened May 24, 1939 at Inglewood, Calif. but lasted only a week. "Union trouble" which had closed Ringling-Barnum a year ago did the same thing to the Great American. As a result the American Federation of Actors suffered many months of "bad press." Rumors continued that the show would resume its tour but it never did. Three items from the McGill collection tell the story of the show's demise. A short item from Variety read as follows:

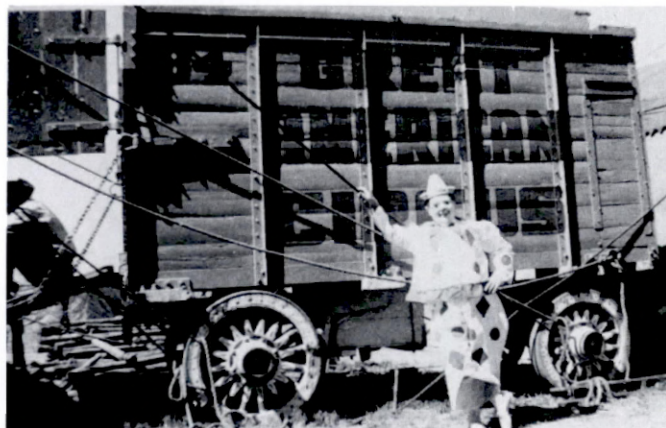
"UNION DEMANDS CLOSE CIRCUS.
Great American Show Shuts Down at Pomona After One-Week Run.

"Unable to meet union demands for its actors and other workers, the Great American Circus was closed in Pomona yesterday after one week of a scheduled lengthy season.

"According to Paul Eagles, manager of the circus, representatives of the American Federation of Actors Wednesday night ordered four of the 26 acts out of the show when Eagles declined to meet union demands.

"After vainly attempting to adjust the situation, Eagles ordered the 84 performers, 250 circus employees, a band and other workers to the paymaster's wagon and paid them off.

Danny McAvoy, veteran clown, in front of Great American Circus baggage wagon No. 84. All photos were taken on the lot at Inglewood, Calif., May 24, 1939 by Hugh S. McGill. Color scheme for baggage wagons was orange with title in blue.





George Tipton, cookhouse steward, on Great American lot. In rear is the show's steam boiler wagon.

"Only 35 of the 84 performers were members of the A.F.A., Eagles said. The union emissary, accompanied by five bodyguards demanded a wage minimum of \$45.00 a month plus board and room for the regular workers, and higher wages for bosses and others, according to Eagles."

An example of the unfavorable press reaction to the show's closing is as follows in this editorial also from Variety.

"THE SHOW DOESN'T GO ON.

"It is probably a good thing for the New Deal that children have no votes.

"The closing at Pomona last week of the Great American Circus, after one week of its scheduled summer season, is the second juvenile tragedy of its kind within a year. At the

Spud Redrick, band director of Great American Circus. Redrick led the band on the Al G. Barnes Circus for many seasons.



Art Windecker, sideshow manager, on bally platform in front of Great American Circus sideshow.

misrepresentation by their officials is a question."

Finally there is this letter addressed to Mr. McGill and signed by C. W. Nelson, Manager Fair Booking Dept., Fanchon & Marco, which read in part as follows:

"For some reason your letter of May 29th sent to Pomona did not reach me until this morning. Thanks for your kind interest and I can assure you that it's appreciated. You have no doubt heard by now that due to the unwarranted action of the American Federation of Actors, the show was forced to close at Pomona on May 31st, and rather than have a repetition of the labor annoyance, we have had to contend with, we have decided not to send the show out again this season."

Arthur Borella, veteran clown, on Great American Circus lot.



Ralph J. Clawson on the Great American lot, season of 1939. Clawson was on the show to look out for the Ringling property which was leased to Great American. He is shown here in front of baggage wagon No. 84, which was used on the 1938 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus.

very start of the 1938 tour of the country the Ringling Bros.-Barnum & Bailey Circus was similarly forced to quit, for the first time in 100 years by "labor troubles" of the kind in which the National Labor Relations Board specializes.

"Less than half of the 84 Great American performers joined in the union demands which the circus was unable to meet, but nearly 300 employees are out of jobs as a result. How long even union workers will stand for such

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THE RAY W. ROGERS CIRCUSES

By Joseph T. Bradbury

PART IV — WALLACE BROS. CIRCUS 1937

The winter of 1936-37 was one of the most important ever for Ray Rogers and his show. Several major decisions were made, the show was incorporated, enlarged, given a new title, and opened the 1937 season with the finest equipment and best performance of any circus to date under the Rogers banner.

Rogers, working primarily through Paul Conway of Macon, Georgia, his general counsel for the past few years, succeeded in bringing into the show's financial picture two brothers, George R. and Minter J. Wallace, who had been prominent in the automobile and truck business in the southeast for a number of years. Their home base was in Macon and they agreed to furnish new truck equipment which was badly needed at the time and join with Rogers in forming a new corporation which would operate the circus. Rogers had been in a partnership with William Hamilton until buying out the latter's interest in the winter of 1934-35 and had operated as an individual since that time.

The Macon Circus Equipment Company was issued a charter by the superior court in Macon, Ga. in early 1937. Officers included Ray W. Rogers, president; George R. Wallace, vice president; Paul M. Conway, executive vice president and general counsel; Herbert W. Rogers, recording secretary-treasurer; Minter J. Wallace, corresponding secretary. Ray W. Rogers was also named as general manager. The new company made two basic decisions at the beginning. First, to enlarge the present Barnett show making it comparable in size to the one at beginning of the 1935 season, and secondly, to go with a new title in 1937—Wallace Bros.

Wallace was a good name to use in outdoor



Wallace Bros. 1937 one sheet upright for Tom Tyler, Hollywood Movie Cowboy, had red base with circus title and "Tom Tyler" in yellow and other lettering in white. Circus World Museum, Baraboo, Wis. Photo.

showbusiness. The Hagenbeck-Wallace title, and before that The Great Wallace Shows, had been an alltime favorite in the country. Incidentally, Hagenbeck-Wallace was returning to

The new letterhead printed for the 1937 season featured Hoot Gibson. It is printed in blue ink, except for the reference to Gibson which is red. Pfening Collection.

the road in 1937 after being off for a single season. So far I have been unable to find any circus prior to the 1937 Wallace Bros. using that title, however there was currently on the road a Wallace Bros. Shows, carnival, which travelled on two baggage cars and ten trucks. It was under the management of Ernest G. Farrow and wintered in Mobile, Ala. Rogers hoped he could capitalize on the reputation of this fine old circus name and since his new associates actually had the name of Wallace no legal difficulties over the title could be expected.

In a recent interview Walter A. Rogers said that the main reason for the switch to the new title was that his father wanted to enlarge the show and would play in territory frequented the past season by the much smaller Barnett Bros. show and he was afraid if he kept the Barnett title the natives would think the 1937 show would be the same size as before. It was good logic. Ray much preferred operating a large show and wanted just as quickly as possible to again have one the size of the show that began the 1935 season before financial difficulties necessitated it's reduction. However, he just didn't have the capital to rebuild his current show into the size he wanted so found it necessary to seek new partner-money elsewhere.

The exact extent of the financing provided by the Wallaces' is not known to the author, but it was considerable and consisted pri-



Billing for Fon du Lac, Wis. July 5, 1937 featured special Hoot Gibson paper, however he had left before show date. Pfening Collection.

marily (if not wholly) in the number of new trucks they provided.

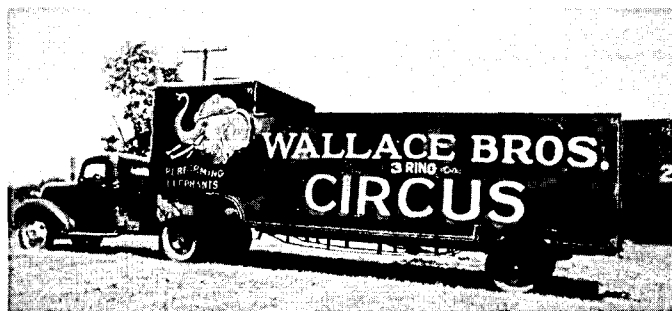
It will be noticed that Herbert W. Rogers of New Glasgow, N. S., Ray's father, was listed as an officer of the new corporation. Sources in New Glasgow who knew him say he invested in the show but in what amount is not known. Actually he was not active in the show management and died later in the summer that same year.

First news of the new Wallace Bros. Circus was made public in the Feb. 13, 1937 Billboard and at that time it was announced it would be an entirely new show, a second circus for Rogers, but of course this was not the case. The reports of heavy building activity at the York quarters were true. The shop forces worked day and night building new metal semis to be pulled by the newly arrived tractors. Other reports say some new semis were purchased outright. Photos indicate many new vehicles added to the fleet. In addition to the new equipment many of the older units were given a thorough renovation and placed in first class condition.

Big news continued to flow out of York for the next few weeks. The Feb. 27, 1937 Billboard said the show had signed western film star, Hoot Gibson, to appear during the coming season. Gibson was a top notch attraction and ranked high among the currently popular movie cowboys. It was to be his first tour with a circus. Gibson signed for 20 weeks with the show holding an option for an additional 13. Details as to the compensation arrangement are lacking but it primarily dealt with a percentage of the receipts he would get.

With the signing of Gibson, general agent

Second Wallace Bros. elephant truck on lot at Fon du Lac, Wis., July 5, 1937. Pfening Collection.



Wallace Bros. elephant semi on lot at Fon du Lac, Wis., July 5, 1937. Pfening Collection.

all of the full side tableau type paintings were now gone. No report has come in on the exact number of cages and their contents but it is believed to have been about five, same as in recent years.

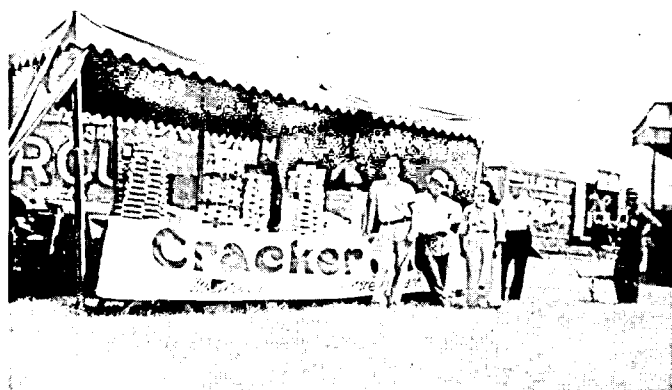
The elephant herd numbered six, Junie, Della, Freida, Alice, Eva, and Danny. All were Asiatic females with exception of Danny, a good sized and rather tough male with ivory showing. It may be recalled Eva and Danny had been purchased from Kay Bros. Circus in December 1936 and would be making their first tour with a Ray Rogers show. A camel and about two dozen lead stock (liberty, menage, wild west, etc.) were also carried.

The 1937 Wallace Bros. staff was listed as follows: Ray W. Rogers, manager; O. C. Cox, legal adjuster; Oscar Wiley, James Cotter, contracting agents; Virgil Pruitt, brigade manager; Vestal Pruitt, manager of advertising cars; Hershel Rapp, checker-up; Champ Simpson, road treasurer; A. A. (Shorty) Gibson, boss canvasman big top; Enoch Bradford, sideshow boss canvasman; Bugs Kelly, menagerie boss canvasman; George Reid, 24-hour agent; H. W. Morris, advertising banners; Dan Hanson, supt. of animals; Robert Newell, supt. transportation; Alex McIntosh, chief mechanic; R. L. Dick, chief electrician; Tommy Burns, equestrian director and supt. of elephants; W. R. Tumber, sideshow manager and press agent back; Ralph Cautin, supt. inside tickets; Keller Pressley, supt. front door; Guy Coddling, supt. cookhouse; Henry Cassilo, supt. props; John A. Fox, supt. privileges; Harold Lengs, contracting press agent; Dory E. Miller, story man. (Note this was NOT the Dory R. Miller of Hugo, Okla.)

According to Walter A. Rogers neither George R. or Minter J. Wallace travelled with

Wallace Bros. semi no. 63 with new model Chevrolet tractor on lot at Fon du Lac, Wis., July 5, 1937. Pfening Collection.





Wallace Bros. band on lot at Fon du Lac, Wis., July 5, 1937. Pfening Collection.

the show nor were active in the day by day management.

Joining the show for the 1937 season was the late William H. Woodcock and his wife, Babe, and young son, Bill Jr. (Buckles.) Woodcock, who had worked elephants on various shows for many years, signed on as a ticket seller for the sideshow and remained in that capacity for the next six seasons. As mentioned earlier Woodcock once told me that Ray Rogers was the best motorized show operator he ever served with.

Rogers' tenth edition, now under the Wallace Bros. banner, opened the 1937 season at York, S. C. on April 8. It was in the rain but the show was greeted by two packed houses. Both city and county schools closed for the day. The big top was filled twenty minutes before the opening matinee which gave an indication of the affection the York natives had for their local show. Immediately prior to the opening whistle a delegation of York citizens presented floral tributes in the center ring to Mrs. Josephine Rogers, wife of the owner. Despite the holiday atmosphere and broad smiles brought on by the tremendous business done on opening day the show was not without difficulties. The heavy rains of recent days prevented use of the regular lot so another near the quarters was substituted but it was so crowded there was not room to erect the menagerie top. At the dress rehearsal the day before Thomas Shaw, a high wire performer, fell about 20 feet damaging his left elbow to extent he was unable to work for several weeks.

The Billboard had a reporter cover the initial performance which lasted one hour and 55 minutes and he wrote that all three rings were used for every display with exception of four. The center ring was used exclusively for the Tan Araki Japs, acrobatic act, Capt. Dalbeanie's wheel balancing number, the Rogintosh Troupe of riders, and the Rogers Sisters, wire act. (The three Rogers daughters, Helene, Norma, and Connie all appeared in the wire act). The Billboard review was a rather unusual report in that the performance didn't rate as much space as other aspects and only a general summary of acts was given rather than the customary detailed listing by display. The review said that three bar acts were presented by the Charles Forest Duo,



Charlie Campbell (at extreme left) with other butchers in front of candy stand on Wallace Bros. lot, Fon du Lac, Wis., July 5, 1937. Pfening Collection.

the Valera Brothers, and the Kotch Brothers. The Valera brothers also had a flying act. Listed as outstanding were the head balancing feats of Viola Rooks and Johnny Knarr, while Jack and Sills perch number was termed as sensational. Other notes said that Capt. Dalbeanie's feature is his balancing on a huge wagon wheel while the Rooks Troupe have a novel perch act. The Rogintosh Riding act consisted of Helene Rogers, Flo McIntosh, Eddie Henricks, and T. P. Lewis; Pearl Harris and Eddie Henricks are in heel and toe catch numbers, while elephants are worked by Ursaline McIntosh, Ruth Wood, and Helene Rogers, assisted by Capt. Tommy Burns, Bill Ward, and Joe Secastian. A 12 horse liberty act is worked by Texas Ted Lewis. Clowns are in three principal displays with Ed Raymond, producing, and 8 other joeys.

Hoot Gibson appeared twice in the big show and then headed a company of 15 in the wild west concert. During the concert he rides, ropes, talks, and was a clever master of ceremonies. Actually Texas Ted Lewis was in charge of the cowboys and cowgirls and Jimmy Sabo, wrestler, provided a fine extra attraction.

The opening spec was costumed in a Spanish motif and Jean Lincoln was prima donna. Ira Haynes headed a good 13 piece band.

The sideshow lineup had Charles Rainer,

Wallace Bros. newspaper ad for Port Huron, Michigan, June 8, 1937. Circus Memories Fryeburg, Maine, Collection.


PORT HURON TUES. 8
STONE STREET SHOW GROUNDS JUNE 8

WALLACE BROS. CIRCUS

Present **HOOT GIBSON**

in person
AMERICA'S GREATEST WESTERN SCREEN STAR

HERDS OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS!
CHAMPION ARENIC STARS
400 PEOPLE 400
MOST OF CLOWNS



ADULTS 50¢
CHILDREN 25¢

TWO SHOWS DAILY—3:15 P.M. AND 8:00 P.M. Downtown
 ticket sale on Circus Day at Liggett's Drug Store.

accordionist; Arizona Gordon and Miss Oliva, impalement; Mary Slyvaita, mentalist; Ann Cavanaugh, Barbara Jensen, and Lucille Cautin, dancers; James Belle and his Georgia Minstrels band and dancers, and the usual Punch & Judy, magic, etc.

Leaving York the show went into North Carolina for dates at Hickory and Winston-Salem and then jumped across Virginia into West Virginia with first stand coming at Bluefield on April 12. Other stands in the state came at Beckley, Oak Hill, Richwood, Webster Springs, Buchanan, Grafton, Morgantown, Fairmont, Clarksburg, and Parkersburg. Beckley which Wallace played April 13 was an opposition stand with Downie Bros. scheduled for April 24. Although the weather was very rough in many spots generally business was very good, heavier than it had been in many years. J. W. Hartigan, Jr. caught the show at Morgantown, April 20, and wrote The Billboard the show had capacity attendance at that stand. He also mentioned that a noticeable feature is the consideration and courtesy given the patron by the show.

Again, the show routed in very early season into the Upper Ohio Valley, a territory Rogers liked to play each spring and usually to very good results. Other shows also liked it and Downie Bros. and Walter L. Main made it to the area very rapidly, but Rogers beat them into the stands he wanted. Wallace entered Ohio at Marietta, April 24, and after a Sunday run was at Cambridge on the 26th. Wheeling, W. Va., nearly always a good show town, was fast becoming a jinx for Rogers. In March 1936, the heavy floods ruined State Fair Park, the usual Wheeling lot, and Rogers could find no other acceptable spot so passed it up, but this year the park had been cleaned up to some extent and Wallace Bros. was booked for April 27. Before the move was made from Cambridge it was learned that due to heavy rains the Wheeling fair ground lot was again under several feet of water so a substitute date had to be found in short order. It was decided to play New Philadelphia, O. on the 27th, thus coming in ahead of Walter L. Main, scheduled for May 5. The only advertising made in advance of the Wallace showing was a few newspaper ads which came out only

hours before show time, but the word was quickly passed and at the evening performance a near capacity crowd was on hand.

Heavy rains flooded the lot at East Liverpool, April 28, where the show was scheduled to play under Elks auspices but a substitute lot was located and the show did an excellent day's business despite opposition from Downie Bros. which was booked for May 4. A Billboard photo (unfortunately not of adequate quality to run here) showed Wallace Bros. to have posted huge quantities of billing paper. A full line of Wallace paper had been provided by Erie. Since both the Wallace and Barnett names had the same number of letters a title strip could be easily pasted over the other shows paper thus making any excess paper readily usable.

Even though the original East Liverpool lot was flooded the skies cleared and the show got a long waited for break in the weather. The next day at Warren was one of the best businesswise so far in the season. While at Warren, Rogers announced that a new trailer and touring car to be used by Hoot Gibson had arrived.

The show next went into Pennsylvania at Sharon. It was back in the Keystone state which was played so heavily by Barnett Bros. in 1936. Rogers said that he was moving his show very cautiously eastward. He told The Billboard he was picking up many of the regular Barnett stands but that he planned to double back soon and play extensively through the midwest. Other Pennsylvania stands during the remainder of the week and the following came at Newcastle, New Brighton, Butler, Tarentum, Monessen, Jenette, and Altoona. Some opposition came primarily from Downie Bros. and Walter L. Main. Wallace played Butler on May 4 and Downie was in May 12. At Aliquippa, it was really close. Wallace playing on May 10 and Walter L. Main, May 12.

On the Sunday layover, May 9, many

visitors from Wallace Bros. and Hagenbeck-Wallace journeyed to Carnegie, Pa. where the Walter L. Main Circus was set up to attend the birthday party for the show's owner, Honest Bill Newton. All three shows had been close to each other in the area.

Two additional weeks were spent in Pennsylvania with the final stand coming at Bradford, May 22. As Rogers had played so extensively in the state the year before it was difficult to find a place not visited in 1936, but with a larger show and new title this posed no problem. Business continued to be considerably better than the previous season.

It was back into Ohio, May 24, at Conneaut with additional stands in the state at Ashtabula, Painesville, Elyria, Lorraine, Mansfield, Marion, Bucyrus, and Tiffin. The show entered Michigan, June 3, at Monroe, followed by Wyandotte and Pontiac, and two more full weeks plus two days of dates would come before leaving the state for Indiana. Several stands including Royal Oak, Zeiders Speedway, Highland Park, and Dearborn were in the Detroit area. The June 19, 1937 Billboard interviewed Rogers who gave a goodly amount of information concerning recent happenings and business of the show. Rogers said that business in North Carolina, West Virginia, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Michigan had been good whenever the weather had cooperated, better than it was last year. He said there had so far been no CIO or other union activity around the show. Union activity aimed at circuses was a going thing in the summer of 1937. The American Federation of Actors were working on Ringling-Barnum and would soon succeed in getting a contract to unionize virtually every segment of the show and would then head after Cole Bros. and Hagenbeck-Wallace. Rumors were also strong that the new CIO which was causing considerable labor unrest in many industries would get into the act and attempt to organize some shows, hence the reason for

Rogers' remark. Examples of good days recently played were Flint, June 9, which drew heavily despite rain, and Pontiac, June 5, which was a good one with a capacity house at night. While in the Detroit area, Eva, one of the elephants purchased from Kay Bros., died following a performance. Her death was attributed to eating a pair of shoes belonging to her keeper. Reports in The Billboard stated that Wallace was to play its first Sunday date of the year, June 13, on the Zeider Speedway lot, however, the official route indicates the show was there only one day, Monday, June 14. When Wallace entered the Detroit area it found Ringling-Barnum paper up all over the place for its stand scheduled July 18-20.

Benton Harbor, June 22, was the final Michigan stand and then the show moved into Indiana at Michigan City. As the Rogers family auto and trailer was turning off the highway onto the lot in Michigan City a truck struck the vehicle causing injuries to the occupants. Mrs. Rogers suffered a fractured right collar bone, Helene Rogers, a sprained ankle, and Pat Knight, minor cuts. Keller, Pressly, the driver, was cut and bruised. Fortunately none of the injuries were serious.

After two more Indiana stands at Hammond and Gary the show moved into Illinois for a week of dates in the Chicago suburbs. Dates played were at Chicago Heights, Blue Island, Berwyn, Cicero, Elgin, Evanston, and Waukegan. Business at all stands was good. Cicero regarded as a "tough," old Al Capone town, gave the show no trouble and the night house was capacity. Visitors in the Chicago area praised the show's excellent equipment.

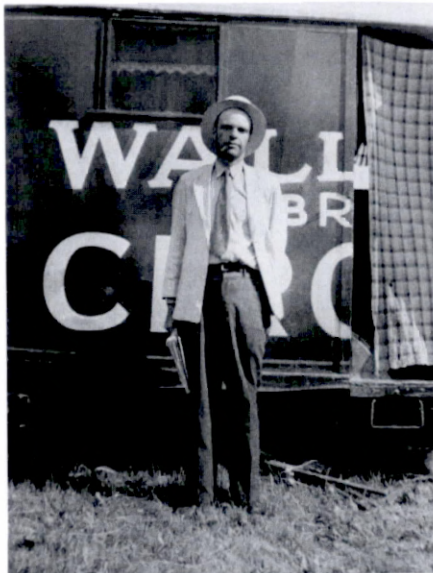
While in the Chicago suburbs Hoot Gibson suddenly quit the show and moved immediately to join the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus, a large railroad show owned by Howard Y. Bary. Gibson appeared in the Hagenbeck performance at Elkhart, Ind. June 28 and at

Texas Ted Lewis, who headed the wild west aftershow for Ray Rogers many seasons, on Wallace Bros. lot at Plymouth, Wis., July 4, 1937. Pfening Collection.

Charlie Campbell, Wallace Bros. candy butcher, on lot at Plymouth, Wis., July 4, 1937. Pfening Collection.



William H. Woodcock, sideshow ticket seller, on lot at Plymouth, Wis., July 4, 1937. Pfening Collection.





Wallace Bros. elephant herd of five on lot at Michigan City, Ind. June 23, 1937. Tough male elephant, Danny is at extreme right. Photo by Don Howland.

Jackson, Mich., June 29. Rogers' attorney went into action right away and while Gibson and Hagenbeck-Wallace were in Ann Arbor, Mich. on June 30 went into court pleading breach of contract against Gibson and sought an immediate injunction. One was given in time to prevent Gibson from appearing in the performance that day. It was issued by George W. Sample, Circuit Judge at Ann Arbor pending hearings on the matter. When it came before the court Rogers contended that Gibson's contract called for twenty weeks of his services and that he broke the contract and went to work in the same capacity with Hagenbeck-Wallace. Gibson countered that Rogers had not paid him the agreed percentages and in so doing had broken the contract himself and he felt he should be free to leave. The "culprit" behind the unpleasant matter was said to have been William "Bill" Moore, former legal adjuster for Ray Rogers who was now associated with Howard Y. Bary and the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Bill Woodcock told the author that "Bill Moore stole Hoot from Rogers like a thief in the night and took him to Howard Bary." Walter Rogers recently said that Gibson was inticed to break his contract with his father and go with Hagenbeck-Wallace. At the time when questioned by reporters, Howard Y. Bary played the innocent bystander, and said that Hoot just came to him wanting a job, saying that Rogers wouldn't pay him what he promised, etc., etc.

In the meantime while the Gibson matter was before the court for several weeks the Wallace show moved on into Wisconsin at

Racine, July 3. It was at Plymouth for the anticipated big July 4 date and at Fon du Lac, the 5th, where the late Sverre O. Braathen, noted circus historian and CHS member, visited. Photos show Hoot Gibson billing paper posted for the Wisconsin stands but of course, fans in the area were disappointed when their favorite cowboy star did not appear. Seventeen additional stands in Wisconsin were played.

Back to the courtroom in Ann Arbor, following arguments in the case, the injunction was lifted and Hoot Gibson released from his contract with Wallace Bros. and left free to go with Hagenbeck-Wallace which he rejoined at Richmond, Indiana. Moore and Bary made a big deal out of the ruling and ran a large advertisement in the July 31, 1937 Billboard which read in part as follows:

"Hoot Gibson Rides Again With Hagenbeck-Wallace Under Management of William Moore. The Honorable George W. Sample, Circuit Judge, State of Michigan, County of Washtenaw, City of Ann Arbor, at hearing in case of Macon Circus Equipment Co. vs. Hoot Gibson, Hagenbeck-Wallace, and Howard Y. Bary rendered in part quoted—"It is hereby ordered, adjudged, and decreed that the injunction heretofore issued in said cause is hereby dissolved and that the bills of complaint heretofore filed in said cause be dismissed by order of this court and that it is further ordered, adjudged, and decreed that the contract between the Macon Circus Equipment Co. and Hoot Gibson is hereby cancelled set aside, and held for naught."

Charlie Campbell (left) and CFA McFarland in front of Wallace Bros. ticket trailer on lot at Fon du Lac, Wis., July 5, 1937. Ticket prices posted on sign read 25 and 50 cents for the big show. Pfening Collection.



Sleeper semis No. 54 and 57 on Wallace Bros. lot, Watertown, Wis., July 22, 1937. Pfening Collection.

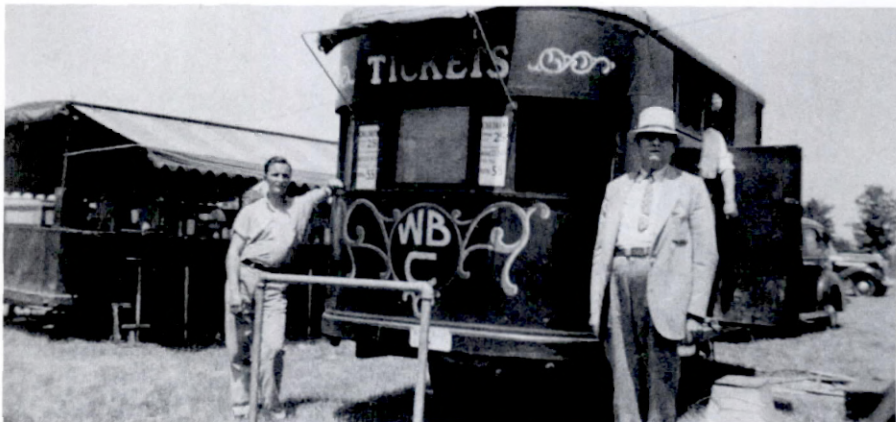
A week later in the Aug. 7, 1937 Billboard Rogers said he wanted to clarify the story of the Gibson suit. He said no final hearing was held but a mutual agreement was reached. Rogers said a settlement was reached by all parties without touching on the merits of the case. Some have said that Bary came up with enough dough for Rogers to forget the matter but this is only speculation. Only definite fact known is that Gibson continued the season with Hagenbeck-Wallace and Rogers was left without the services of his star attraction.

Rogers moved quickly to secure a suitable replacement for Gibson and was able to get Tom Tyler, another movie cowboy, although of considerably lesser stature than Gibson. Tyler was fairly well known, having appeared in more than 20 feature films. He flew in from the West Coast and joined Wallace while it was still in Wisconsin and shipped his horse and special \$1500 silver saddle made for his personal appearances by rail. Tyler, as did Gibson, appeared in both the big show performance and concert.

Although reports in the trade publications continued at times to claim the show was still doing big business. Bill Woodcock said the receipts took a decided drop as soon as Gibson left and that Tom Tyler didn't have the same drawing power and the ticket wagon suffered accordingly.

Several photos taken of the Wallace Bros. big top in Wisconsin show it to have only one row of quarter poles indicating it to be something less than a 120 ft. round, in all probability a 110 ft. round with three 40's. Whether or not this top was added during the season, possibly to replace the older one damaged by the weather, is not known to the author. It appears to be in very good condition. Of course, the possibility exists since we do not have photographic proof otherwise that this top was the one put into use at the beginning of the season and the reports of a 120 ft. top or larger were false.

Lake Geneva, July 23, was the final Wisconsin town and then the show went back into Illinois the next day at Aurora. Stands at Peru, Sterling, Moline, and Galesburg followed and then it was into Iowa to play Fort Madison and Keokuk. Returning to Illinois at Quincy, Aug. 2, the show remained in the state for twelve more stands. During these weeks not much news appeared in the trade publications. The Aug. 7, 1937 Billboard did say that Harold Lengs, a press agent for the show, was landing some splendid writeups in the middle west and a visitor noted that a telephone system operated by the show's own





Hoot Gibson, famous Hollywood movie cowboy, on Wallace Bros. lot at Michigan City, Ind. June 23, 1937. Photo by Don Howland.

electrical equipment linked both ticket wagons to Rogers' private office and other departments. A later report said that at Springfield, Ill., Aug. 4, the show had a good house in the afternoon and packed them in at night.

CHS members Tom and Bob Parkinson caught the show at Decatur, Ill. on Aug. 5, and Tom said he met Bill Woodcock for the first time that day, although he had corresponded with him earlier. Competition was a real factor of life for circuses in 1937 and Tom recalls that his home town of Decatur, Ill. had four circuses that season—Seils-Sterling, May 1; Hagenbeck-Wallace, June 16; Wallace Bros., August 5; and Tom Mix, Sept. 23.

The final Illinois town was Cairo, Aug. 16, and then the show went south into Tennessee at Union City, with additional stands in the state at Dyersburg, Jackson, Savannah, and Lawrenceburg. Alabama dates at Florence, Decatur, Huntsville, Guntersville, and Gadsden came next and the show entered Georgia August 28, at Rome.

Charles Wirth writing in Sawdust and Spangles in the Aug. 28, 1937 Billboard had an interesting little observation on the show as follows:

"Wallace Bros. Circus is a motorized show that moves every night immediately after the performance. It has an enviable record for no serious accidents. Manager Ray W. Rogers believes it is safer to drive at the midnight hour than just as the sun is rising. It is a natural inclination for truck drivers to fall asleep at dawning and many of the worst wrecks in motorized show history have been blamed on sleepy drivers."

Tom Tyler appeared in the performance at Rome then drove to Atlanta and flew to the Pacific Coast where he married Jeannie Mostel, his leading lady in films. The couple was married in the Little Church of the Flowers in Glendale, Calif. Tyler was away from the show during a week in Alabama which saw stands at Anniston, Talledega, Alexander City, Tallasee, Montgomery, and Opelika, but he and his bride rejoined the

show at Columbus, Ga. on September 6. Mrs. Tyler appeared with him in the performance.

The Sept. 18, 1937 Billboard said that the show had straw houses both afternoon and night at Columbus on Labor Day, one of the biggest day's grosses of the season. It was set up on the fairgrounds instead of the usual Bellewood lot and was a feature of the big Labor Day celebration at the fairgrounds. Standing room only signs went up long before the night performance was scheduled and there were hundreds on the straw. Alabama business was said to have been good with Montgomery providing an exceptionally fine take. Eddie Sabo, the wrestler in the Wallace concert, left and was now appearing with the Orange State Shows, carnival.

After Columbus, other Georgia stands came at LaGrange, Griffin, Thomaston, Americus, and Albany to complete the week. A second week of Peach State stands began Sept. 13, at Tifton where the show had a fair matinee and capacity at night. Remaining Georgia dates were at Moultrie, Thomasville, Valdosta, Waycross, and Vidalia. The stands in the southern part of the state gave fine business but those in middle Georgia were only fair. Valdosta, Sept. 16, was one of the best stands where the night house was packed and sideshow also did good business throughout the day. A visitor to the show told The Billboard there was plenty of money in Georgia for shows. Downie Bros. was another one of them making a pitch for the Cracker money and was booked into Valdosta, Oct. 6. Downie also played Albany on November 4, as the final stand of the season.

Leaving Georgia, Wallace made a Sunday run to Aiken, S. C. where performances were scheduled for Monday, Sept. 20. Several visitors from the York quarters town visited that day and Paul M. Conway drove over from Macon to spend several days on the show. Press agent, Julien Wood, landed some good publicity in the Augusta, Ga. dailies, 17 miles from Aiken. Hagenbeck-Wallace and Downie Bros. were also battling for stories in those

Spec lining up in Wallace Bros. backyard, Michigan City, Ind. June 23, 1937. Note cage truck in right background. Photo by Don Howland.



The Tan Araki, Japanese acrobatic act, practicing on Wallace Bros. lot, Michigan City, Ind. June 23, 1937. Note cage truck and big top in background. Photo by Don Howland.

same papers. Downie was billed for Augusta, Sept. 21, the day following Wallace's appearance in Aiken.

Additional South Carolina stands came at Orangeburg, Sumter, Camden, and Bennettsville before the show moved into North Carolina to play Whiteville on September 25. For the next week or so Wallace moved back and forth between the two Carolinas. The Oct. 9, 1937 Billboard said the show was now in its 28th week of the season and business had been very satisfactory.

Following a stand at Batesburg, S. C., Oct. 14, the show made a 100-mile jump to Elberton, Ga. and while enroute the cash box inside the ticket truck was opened by a burglar and \$3700.00 stolen. The loss was discovered the next morning in Elberton. The thief had forced open the door to the ticket truck and then pried open the cash drawer in a desk, however, the main safe was not molested. Georgia, South Carolina and federal officers were called in and began an investigation. Two weeks later, C. A. Adams, one of the show's ushers from Springfield,





Wallace Bros. sideshow bannerline on lot at Michigan City, Ind. June 23, 1937. Photo by Don Howland.

Mo. was picked up in a rooming house in Chattanooga by officers acting on a tip as to his whereabouts. He admitted stealing the money from the ticket truck in Greenwood, S. C. as it was enroute to Elberton. He still had \$650.00 on his person and was returned to South Carolina for trial.

The final stand for the 1937 season came at Athens, Ga. on Saturday, Oct. 16. The Billboard said that unusually cold weather caused the decision to cancel a few stands in Georgia and return to York quarters, however, Bill Woodcock said the very slow business for the past few weeks caused Rogers to decide to end the season in Athens and return to quarters with the large Wallace show and to go out again very shortly with a smaller circus, which was his usual custom.

However, there is no doubt the cold weather had hurt attendance with Wallace as well as other shows in the area of late. One of the earliest cold spells ever hit the area in early and mid-October. I caught the show on closing day in Athens and recall it was a very cold, windy, cloudy, and a generally raw day with temperatures at the afternoon show in the 40's. It definitely didn't feel like circus weather and there was only a fair crowd in the afternoon. The menagerie top was not erected that day so the cages and elephants were put in the sideshow. Unfortunately, I didn't have the extra change to visit the sideshow so cannot give an account of the exact number of cages and caged animals, but do recall there were five elephants and about two

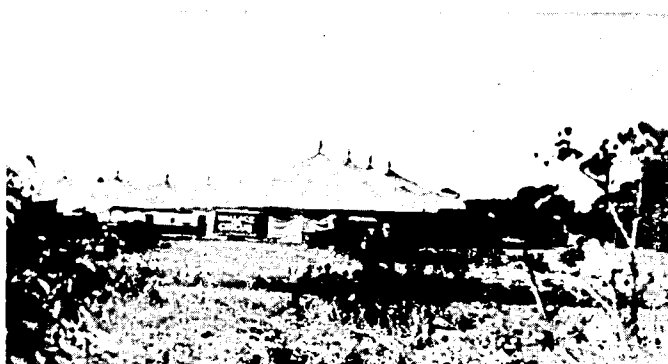
dozen head of stock. The canvas seemed to be in very good condition for late season and I was much impressed with the motorized equipment, most of it semis, all neatly painted and lettered. The performance I felt was very good and was not "John Robinsoned" in any way despite the light crowd on a cold and blustery day. In my mind I can recall so vividly the band closing the performance with "Auld Lang Syne" which was traditionally played at conclusion of both matinee and evening performances on the final day of the season.

The Billboard reported that George R. and Minter J. Wallace came up from Macon on closing day and tendered a banquet honoring Ray Rogers and other show executives.

After about a week in York quarters Rogers took out a smaller show using his former title of Barnett Bros. First stand was at Whitmire, S. C. and soon it moved into Georgia picking up a few stands before heading to Florida. The show was a Covington, Ga., November 5, then made a one hundred mile jump to Ft. Valley, then 79 miles south to Dawson, and very shortly thereafter was in Florida.

The Nov. 13, 1937 Billboard said the performance ran one hour and 26 minutes under direction of Tommy Burns, equestrian director. Ira Haynes had an 8-piece band and four elephants were carried. Evidently the big, tough, male Danny, was left in quarters. Reportedly the show was using 22 trucks and 18 trailers including those privately owned, but this seems to be somewhat of an exag-

Wallace Bros. trucks on front lot at Decatur, Ill., Aug. 5, 1937. Photo by Tom Parkinson.



Wallace Bros. on lot at Decatur, Ill. Aug. 5, 1937. Menagerie top is at left, big top at right. Photo by Tom Parkinson.

geration. No size for the bog top was given but probably the sideshow top, 60 ft. round with three 20's or menagerie, 70 ft. round with three 30's was used as this was customary for the late fall-winter show.

The Nov. 27, 1937 Billboard said that Barnett Bros. played to excellent business November 20 at Bountstown, Fla. It reported the show had been in northern and western Florida for more than a week meeting with success whenever the weather did not interfere. The show was at Plant City, Fla., Nov. 24. The next few weeks saw Barnett still in the Sunshine State and it closed about December 20 in the central part. A 650-mile home run was made to York quarters with the show arriving in time for Christmas. Rogers' final statement to the press which came at the conclusion of the late fall and winter tour was pretty much the same as he had said most of the year, that business was good whenever the weather was, but he emphasized that the unusually cold spells in the south that year had taken its toll.

Overall, Wallace Bros. did pretty good in 1937, the first few months being real fine. It was a season in which the larger rail shows

Wallace Bros. newspaper ad for Athens, Ga. Oct. 16, 1937. This was closing stand of the season. Joe Bradbury Collection.



ATHENS Oglethorpe Avenue Show Grounds		Saturday October 16
WALLACE BROS. CIRCUS		
PRESENTS TOM TYLER (IN PERSON)		
AMERICA'S GREATEST WESTERN SCREEN STAR WITH HIS CONGRESS OF HOLLYWOOD COWBOYS, COWGIRLS, AND INDIANS.		
NOWHERE ELSE CAN SO MUCH BE SEEN - FOR SO LITTLE.		
HERDS OF PERFORMING ELEPHANTS AND CHAMPION ARENA STARS.		
2 SHOWS DAILY 2 P.M. AND 8 P.M. DOORS OPEN 12 P.M.		
ALL NEW ALL DIFFERENT ADULTS 50¢ CHILDREN 25¢		
Reserved Seats on Sale From 9 to 1 Circus Day at Moon-Winn Drug Store		

did better than the small ones, a condition that had been reversed in the few years since the depths of the great depression in the very early 1930's.

The Dec. 25, 1937 Billboard reported that construction had begun in York quarters on a new building. The story said that Rogers had acquired a lot adjoining the show property on East Jefferson and Trinity streets and that a new building was going up which would have a cookhouse, dining room, sleeping quarters equipped with shower bath, and a lumber shed. Rogers also said he planned to construct three additional buildings which would vastly improve the quarters. Bert Pettus said in an interview that after this new real estate and building project was completed Rogers had a very nice winter quarters layout, fully as fine as any comparable show in the country. Whereas the previous winter had seen the major effort go in work on the show's physical equipment the winter of 1937-38 would see it directed to improving the York, S. C. quarters.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT HISTORY OF DOWNIE BROS. CIRCUS

Invariable after a historical article has been published someone will come forth with new information which would have been valuable to the article had the author known about it beforehand. Of course, the informant didn't know the article was being planned and the author was unaware this information

could have been available. In order to seek out as much information as possible, this notice is given at this time to inform the readers that Associate editor, Joe Bradbury, is in process of preparing the history of the Downie Bros. Circus 1926-39 which will be published in The Bandwagon in six installments. The first installment is scheduled to immediately follow the conclusion of the Ray W. Rogers Shows history and will appear in the Sept.-Oct. 1975 issue. The author would like to hear from anyone who has any significant Downie Bros. history, documents, parade lineups, trucks lists, or photos, lithographs, or other illustrative items which could be used. If you were with the show and could relate any experiences, that would be of value. It is suggested that you contact the author in writing at his address, 1453 Ashwoody Ct., N.E., Atlanta, Ga. 30319, on what you could furnish. To avoid duplication, please advise in advance of sending any material.

WANTED CIRCUS POSTERS, TICKETS, LETTERHEADS, ETC.

will pay top value
and provide good home.

RONALD G. GORE
P. O. Box 5161
Jacksonville, Fla. 32207

COLLECTORS NOTICE

1960 FAMOUS COLE CIRCUS Season
Route Folder, Program and personnel
1961 FAMOUS COLE CIRCUS SEASON
ROUTE Book - Contains about seventy
pictures
FAMOUS COLE LITHO PASS
FAMOUS COLE LONG PASS With Reserve
seat stub
CLARK & WALTERS CIRCUS
NEWSPAPER HERALD 1964
CLARK & WALTERS LETTERHEAD 1969
KING BROS. CIRCUS LETTERHEAD 1972
AL G. KELLY & MILLER BROS. CIRCUS
KID TICKET
LITHO PASS
JAMES CHRISTY CIRCUS
BARNES & BAILEY CIRCUS
LETTERHEAD 1964
BARNES & BAILEY ENVELOPE 1964
BARNES & BAILEY NEWSPAPER HERALD
featuring KIRBY GRANT as SKY KING
BARNES & BAILEY LITHO PASS 1964
BARNES & BAILEY WORKING BOY
TICKET 1964
COLORED POST CARD PICTURE
"SKY KING" 1964
SKY KING FUNNY BOOK
COL. TIM McCOY 8 by 10 photo
CARSON BARNES 1959
REX ROSSI & ROY ROGERS
PHOTO - BARNES & BAILEY 1964
FAMOUS COLE CIRCUS COLORING
BOOK 1961
1961 CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS FAN
MEMBERSHIP CARD
Used the one season. A BEAUTIFUL
EMBOSSSED CARD
ABOVE 20 ITEMS - \$10.00
TED LA VELDA
P.O. BOX 577
JEFFERSON, TEXAS 75657

SEASONS GREETINGS



FROM THE STAFF AND PERSONNEL
OF CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS

CHRISTY BROS. CIRCUS

LITHOGRAPHS

The circus operated by George Washington Christy has been one of great interest to circus historians. Beginning in 1914 the Christy's Big Hippodrome Shows was on two cars and by 1919 additional cars were added, by 1925 it reached its peak of 20 cars. The last season of the Christy circus was 1930, although George Christy did operate a truck show titled Lee Bros. in the early 1930's he no longer toured a rail show.

It was in 1925 that G. W. Christy commissioned the Erie Litho Company to design and lithograph a beautiful new group of special poster designs. Each of these bills carry a line of type in the lower left hand corner stating "Copywrite 1925 Christy Bros.

Shows, G. W. Christy Owner." A few from that group are shown here. In addition to Erie a number of posters from the Riverside Printing Co., of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, were used by the Christy show.

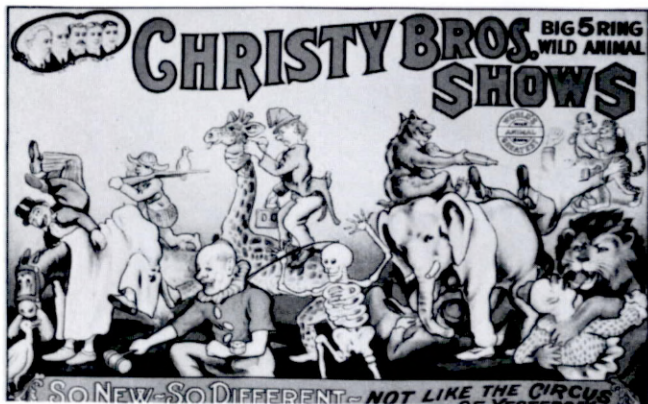
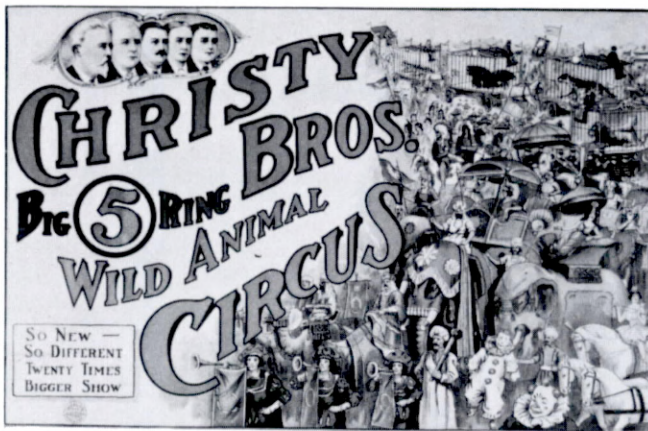
The menagerie interior is a Riverside bill and is probably in more collections today than any other Christy poster due to a quantity of them being sold by the Central Show Print of Mason City, Iowa, as late as the 1950's. Central purchased the remaining inventory of Christy paper at the time of the closing of the Riverside firm.

The hippo, the parade, the ladies menage act, the animal jungle scene and the polar bears are also Riverside bills. The jungle ani-

mals are from the Harold Dunn collection, while the ladies menage act and the polar bears are from the collection of the Circus World Museum.

The remaining posters shown here were printed by the Erie firm. The Noah's Ark, the 50 Dainty Dancing Beauties and the clown bills are from the special 1925 group. The camel upright, and the wild boar act bills are from the Harold Dunn collection. The elephant act, animals racing and lion on horse-back posters are from the Kent Ghirard collection. The big top interior poster is from the Circus World Museum collection. All other posters are from the Pfening collection.







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to

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Circus Fans Everywhere

Grace Weckwerth

C.F.A. P.E.T.A. C.H.S.

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JAMES-CHRISTY WILD ANIMAL CIRCUS

SEASON OF 1960

By Bill Green

Outside of Bridgeport, Baraboo and Sarasota the small Oklahoma city of Hugo has wintered more circuses than any other in the United States.

The Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus came to Hugo at the end of the 1942 season. Circus people bought homes in Hugo and the small city spawned additional shows and titles. Jack Moore brought his tent show to Hugo in 1953 and in 1954 combined forces with Dorey Miller, of the Kelly-Miller show, to take the Tex Carson Circus on the road. This show grew to major size as the Carson & Barnes Circus.

Today the Kelly-Miller show is gone as is Jack Moore, but Dorey Miller continues with a Carson & Barnes circus that is now larger than Kelly-Miller at its peak.

Many other circuses came out of Hugo. A Hugo grocer caught the bug and took out a show in 1944, calling it of all things—Hugo Bros. Robert A. (Little Bob) Stevens framed a show in 1946 in Hugo and called it Stevens Bros. Herbert Walters framed a circus in 1950 and titled it Cole & Walters. It became Famous Cole and continued for many years, before being sold to Bob Couls. Walters got back in the business a few years later with another show calling it Clark & Walters.

Other alumni of the Kelly-Miller organization took other small shows out of Hugo over the years using such titles as Sterling Wallace, Fairyland Circus, Don E. Kerr and James Christy.

The Hugo grocer Vernon Pratt tried it again in 1959 by teaming up with Marlin (Corky) Plunkett to launch the James Christy Combined Circus.

During the 1959 season Mrs. June Plunkett was general agent and the Chuck Fullers handled the side show. The 1959 season opened on April 25th in Boswell, Oklahoma. The 1959 route took the show through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Wisconsin, South and North Dakota. The show returned to Hugo by mid-October after only a fair season.

Plunkett and Pratt took the James Christy show out again in 1960. Tom McLaughlin was general agent the second year. The route in 1960 covered about the same states as the year before. The Woodcock elephants were added in 1960 to beef up the performance.

This review of the James Christy Circus

CRAWFORD Tuesday, June 2 City Park

AFTERNOON & NITE — DOORS OPEN 2:00 & 7:00 P. M.
FREE ENTERTAINMENT ON MIDWAY ONE HOUR PRIOR
TO MAIN CIRCUS TIME



JAMES-CHRISTY
COMBINED
CIRCUS
AND MENAGERIE
OUTSTANDING SUPERSONIC CIRCUS PERFORMANCE
20—THRILLING CIRCUS ACTS—20

See "OLD MOE", leader of the Elephant herd, Balance and turn on 5 inch elevated plank.

THE GRAND PAGEANTRY OF PERFORMING HORSES
Kentucky thoroughbreds, Tennessee Walkers, Prancing horses and pony drills in percision timing.

Hear and See Band Director Main's 7-piece authentic CIRCUS BAND

A FAMILY OF FUNNY CLOWNS... roly poly clowns, lady clowns, skinny clowns, kingsize clowns.

See America's Greatest Acrobats and Aerialists **THE IVANOV'S**

WORLD FAMOUS BAR CASTING ACT FEATURING TRIPLES

CAPTAIN PLUNKETT'S TRAINED WILD ANIMALS:

Comical Chimpanzees, Bears, Performing Elephants

A special invitation is extended to come out to the show grounds early circus morning and see the elephants help put up the big tented city, watch the mechanical stake drivers.

THE MIGHTIEST SHOW WITH THE MOST FOR YOUR MONEY

Admission: Adults, \$1.00 tax included. Children \$\$.50

SEE MONSTER 4-TON BLOOD SWEATING HIPPOPOTAMUS ON EXHIBIT **1959**



The ticket and office wagon was flashed up with attractive lettering and animal painting. This truck was formerly the Dailey Bros. Circus office. The ladder steps and foot board are still visible. Orlo Rahn Photo.

was done during the Wilber, Nebraska stand in 1960.

The show was forced to cancel the matinee due to the canvas truck overturning enroute and a flat tire on the truck carrying the Woodcock elephants. The delays resulted in a very late arrival on the lot.

Attendance was light at the night show, mainly due to the town's first football game of the season.

All of the equipment was in good condition, yet showing evidence of a rough season. The midway was attractive with a sideshow and a couple of pit shows.

The circus moved on ten show owned trucks as follows:

Chevrolet Semi-Elephant (show owned), chimp and props.

Chevrolet Van-Organ and props.

Chevrolet Semi-Ring stock.

Dodge Flat Bed-Stake driver, side poles and water tank.

The show owned elephant, formerly on the Dailey show was carried in this trailer along with a chimp and some props.





This cutdown semi carried poles, stakes, stake puller and seat lumber.

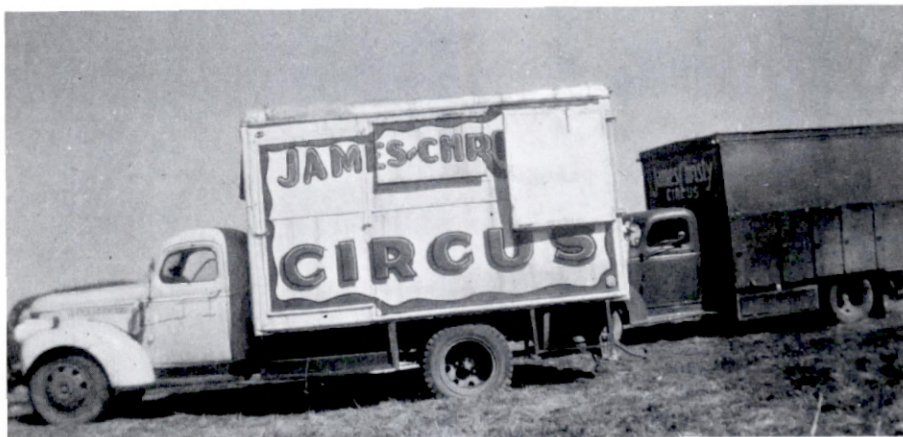


The ring stock was carried in this semi. This photo was taken in winterquarters and has the 1959 lettering. It was redecorated for the 1960 season. Woodcock



The show owned elephant is shown in front of the stake driver in a 1959 photo. Orlo Rahn Photo.

The organ and props were carried in this Chevrolet van. Woodcock Photo.



Chevrolet Van-Lightplants and cable, pulls sideshow trailer and poles.

GMC Van-Concessions, pulls concession trailer.

Chevrolet Semi-Office ticket wagon.

Chevrolet Straight Bed-Alligator pit show, pulls cage wagon for side show.

Chevrolet Flat Bed Semi-Poles and seats.

Chevrolet Straight Bed-Canvas Spool.

There were several other trucks including the Woodcock elephant semi that were not show owned.

Around forty people were with the show.

The performance, presented in two rings was excellent, opening with the traditional Grand Entry in true circus style. Music was on the electric organ, played by Mac McClosky.

The program was as follows:

- 1—Grand Entry
- 2—Dog act
- 3—Clowns—Firecracker Gag
- 4—Liberty ponies (3)
- 5—Web
- 6—Educated chimp
- 7—Ladders (both rings)
- 8—Col. Woodcock's Elephants (3)—Restaurant routine
- 9—Menage
- 10—Clowns—Music gag
- 11—Liberty horses (6)
- 12—Cloud swing
- 13—Wire act
- 14—Clowns
- 15—Riding lesson (using "mechanic")
- 16—Clowns—Funnel Gag
- 17—Woodcock elephants—finale

Clowning on this show is far above the average. Scotty and Onions, shows two clowns not only look like clowns should look with clean, attractive costumes and make-up but introduced a number of new gags as well as new twists to the few older ones used and they had the audience "with them" at every appearance.

The Woodcock elephant, trained by Col. Wm. Woodcock and presented by his son Buckles is one of the finest bull acts the writer has ever seen with any circus and offers many new stunts of pachydermic entertainment.

Most of the other animal acts were presented by Corky Plunkett and all of them were above average with well-trained animals responding to every cue without hesitation.

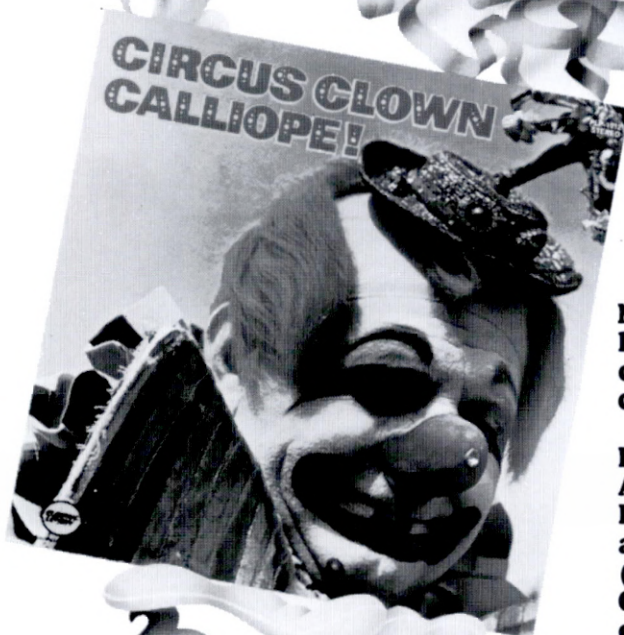
Both the Plunketts and the Pratts were lavish in the hospitality and we found their cook-house to be of as fine a quality as their performance.

This must be a record, finishing the Bandwagon on Dec. 8. We hope it gets to you before the holidays. Merry Christmas to all our readers.

-The Editor

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Season's Greetings

TO ALL OUR FRIENDS

We look forward to seeing you during our

105th YEAR!